BUYING + RIDING + FETTLING

Honda vs Yamaha 250 trail bikes • **NEW** Harris Magnum Project pt1

AJS & Matchless singles buyer's guide • Fit a Triumph Lucas alternator

JULY 2023
ISSUE #522

ClassicBike

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SUPER SPORT
Arai

£1000-£10,000

Deals on wheels

Brilliant buys to get you on the road this summer!

Featuring: Commando, Ducati, Bonneville, Honda 400s, Kawasaki Turbo and more

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ON SALE
JUNE 21-JULY 25

'I scratched Steve McQueen's bike'

Norman Hyde's Triumph factory tales

Ducati revival

Fabulous 900SS rebuilt from a box of broken bits

New Rick rides...

Our man Parkington road tests a '73 Harley Sportster

VISIT…

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Welcome

JULY 2023 • ISSUE #522

Can you have too many bikes? That's a moot point (though Mrs W definitely thinks you can), but certainly the arrival of summer is the perfect excuse to buy another (Oh, whoops. I just did.)

But there's another reason, besides the seasonal weather, to buy now. While the values of some classic bikes have, in the words of the financial services sector, 'become overheated' in recent years, there's currently a refreshing realism in the market and things seem to have calmed down a bit.

True, some machines remain bafflingly overpriced, prompting raised eyebrows and a quizzical 'How much?' But, judging by the repeat adverts on the internet, bikes with optimistic asking prices aren't moving, while anecdotal evidence suggests that buyers who haggle are getting decent deals.

We thought it was worth highlighting some of the machines that are looking like good buys at the moment, because this might be the right time to buy a bike that you've always fancied. Hmm, 650 Bonnevilles and Kawasaki turbos for sensible money? That looks like severe temptation.

Got a bike to sell? Don't forget that *Classic Bike*'s classified adverts are free (see page 106 for details) and are studied in detail as we all search for our next bike. I don't see the adverts before publication (to Mrs W's relief), but there are four pages of them in this issue and I'll bet there's plenty of temptation in there.

There's a couple of changes in this month's *CB*; first we've prised Rick Parkington out of his shed so that he can actually ride some bikes and write about the experience in his own inimitable way. This month he's getting his first taste of a Harley-Davidson aboard a '73 Sportster.

If you want to suggest a bike that you'd like to see him try, or maybe you own a bike that he should ride, then get in touch; the email addess is at the bottom of the page.

Getting Rick out of the workshop means that there's room in there for Alan Seeley and his Harris Magnum project. We'll be following his progress and hoping for a more successful outcome than the Trident build that he started a few years ago, but which still needs finishing. He's promised that the Harris will progress seamlessly, but we know that's unlikely.

These things take time, but I think Dutch reader Fedor van de Pol, who's written a letter this month, is an extreme case. He bought a dismantled Bimota Yamaha in 1994 – and it's still in pieces. Though I doubt that's a record. Got a project that's been years in the making (or not-making)? Write and tell us about it (and please send us a picture of its current state too).

What did I buy? I'll tell you next month, but I'm hoping for a speedier project resolution that Fedor. I want to ride it this summer.

Enjoy the issue

Hugo Wilson, Editor

42

Rick P getting his first taste of a Harley-Davidson

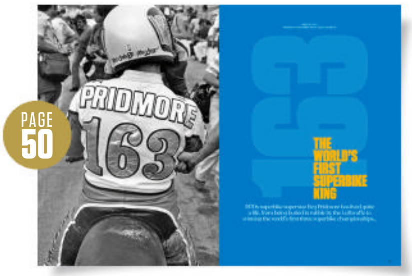
GARY MARGERUM

CONTRIBUTORS
IN THIS ISSUE

Splashdown!
PAGE 64

Paul d'Orléans

In the early 1960s Honda publicised their CL250 street scrambler with an audacious record-breaking run down Mexico's Baja peninsula. Paul rides his own CL250 there in this issue.



Mat Oxley

Mat's day job keeps him in the PR-controlled MotoGP paddock, but he loves finding stories from an age when bike racing was full of proper characters, like Dagenham-born Reg Pridmore.

Soul mate
PAGE 56

Jim Moore

Former *CB* staffer and *Practical Sportsbike* mag editor Jim knows how to sniff out a great restoration story. He's turned up a beautiful Ducati 900SS that was revived after an engine disaster.

Get in touch at: **letters@classicbike.co.uk** or subscribe at **members.classicbike.co.uk**

Issue #522

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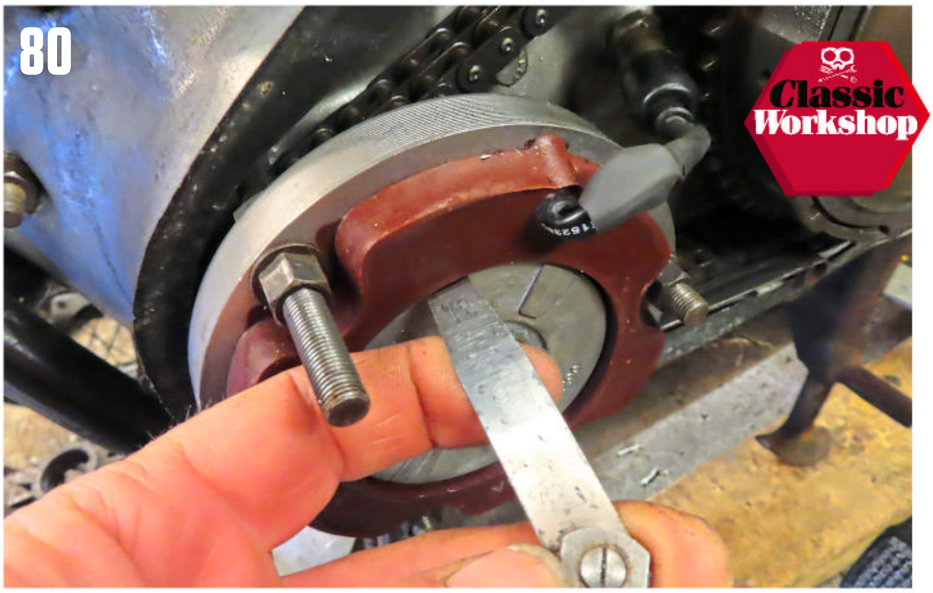
Daredevil Dave Bickers cut a swathe through '60s scrambling – then went on to sort stunts for Bond movies



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French off-roading and Ago leaps on a marines display team bike

VMCC HIGHLAND RALLY | MAY 22-25

Taking the high roads

With a heady combination of dramatic tarmac, rider-friendly weather and convivial company, this was the ideal event for owners who love to keep their classics well exercised

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK HOLMES

The final day saw riders enjoy riding through glorious Scottish west coast scenery from Shieldaig to Inverewe

A pair of Vincent singles – a Comet with a special behind it – heading away from Lochcarron towards the 'Pass of the Cattle' to Applecross

THE HIGHLAND RALLY attracted participants from all over the UK, Ireland, Spain, the Netherlands, Germany, and even as far afield as Malta, to the leafy Victorian spa town of Strathpeffer. Nestled north-west of Inverness, the town served as a base for three full days of touring the majestic Scottish Highlands.

Organiser John Makinson has been a member of the VMCC for over 30 years, but had never put together such an event before – let alone an international gathering involving 120 people. "I wanted to put on a rally where everything was laid on – accommodation, food, suggested routes – but also gave people the space to do their own thing," he explained.

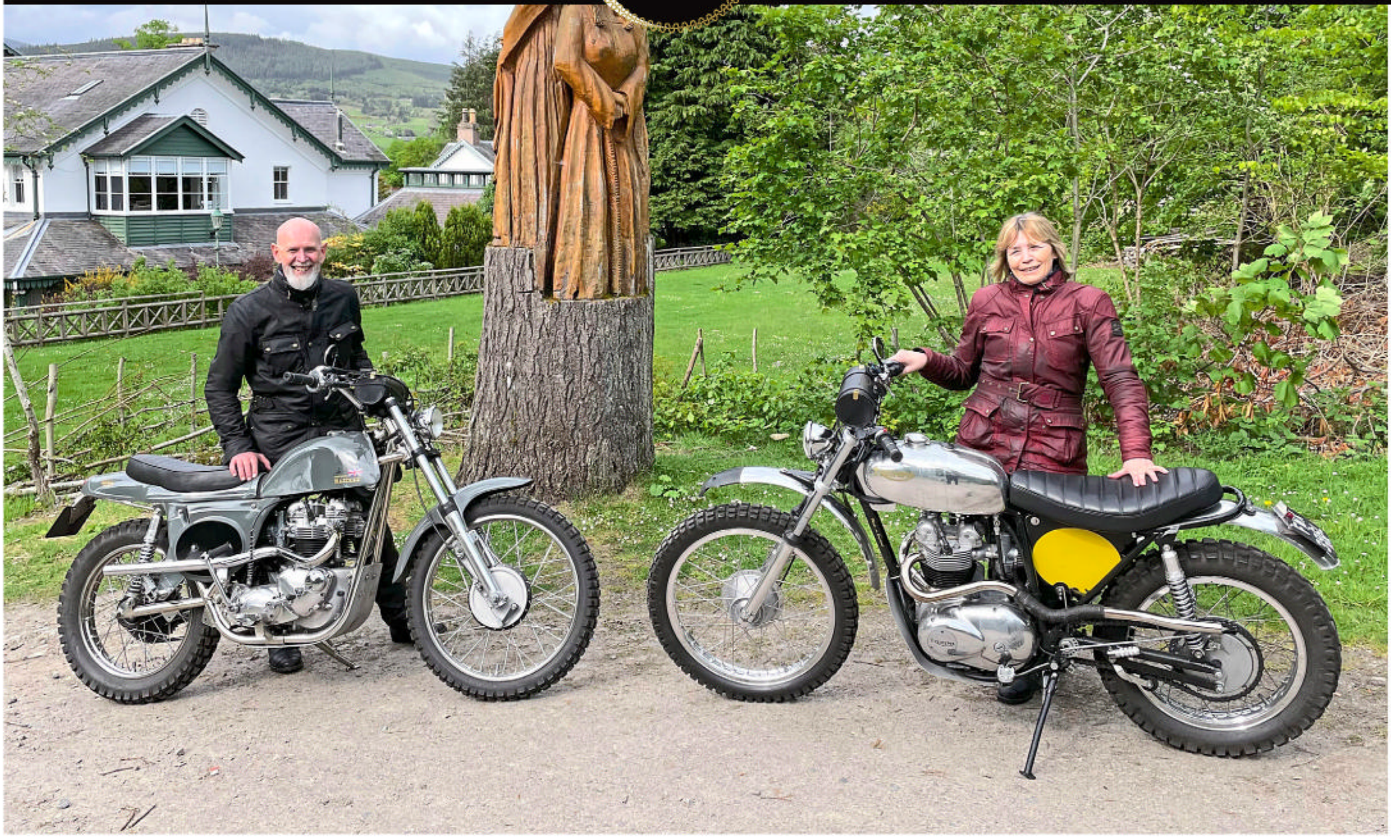
He and fellow conspirator John Proffitt (of Clyde Valley VMCC) put together an eminently affordable package including four nights at the Highland Hotel with dinner, bed and breakfast included, plus refreshments laid on at lunch and intermediate stop-offs along the suggested routes. Averaging nearly 200 miles a day, these routes varied from challenging single-track roads with spectacular views over lochs, mountains and coastal scenery to swathes of open sweepers.

The two Johns are keen to push VMCC events into the 21st century and promote the benefits of club membership. If the beaming faces of the riders returning to the hotel after the last day of the Highland Rally – which took in a spectacular route along the west coast, bathed in sunshine streaming through dramatic cloud – are anything to go by, they're definitely on the right track.

"If you come up with new ideas, it keeps the whole thing fresh," added Makinson. "Biking has always been a social thing for me," he concluded, and there was certainly a convivial air to the post-riding chatter during dinner and at the bar – as well as the chaotic Scottish country dancing on the last night!

- *CB's* Mark Holmes shares his personal experience of the Highland Rally on page 88

vmcc.net



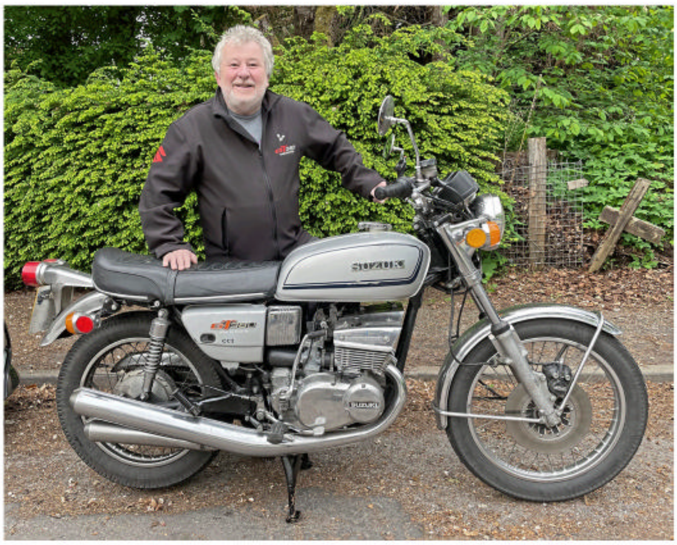
Paul and Michelle Reardon
2019 Metisse Desert Racer Steve McQueen Replica and 1973 Triumph TR5T Trophy Trail

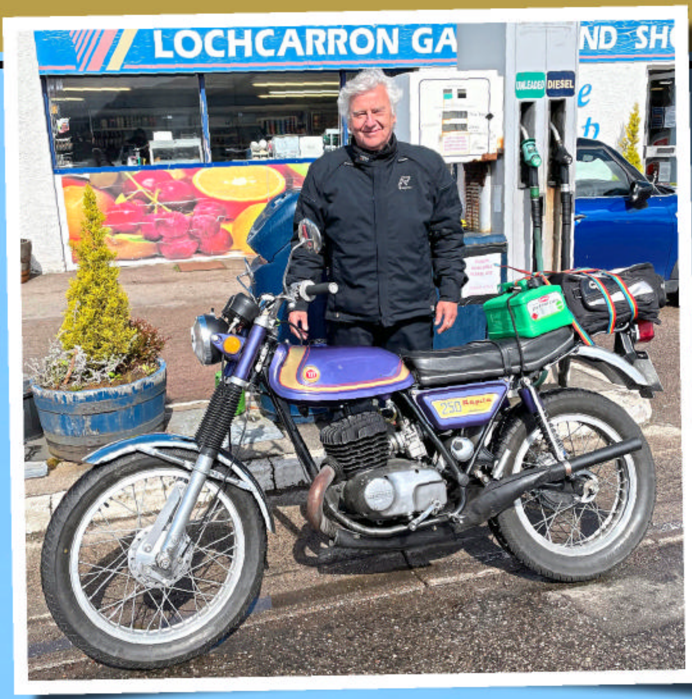
Paul and Michelle run a vehicle tracking company in Essex, but have a passion for a different pastime – riding the British motorcycles that Paul meticulously fettles during his downtime. They have been regulars at a variety of European classic events ever since Michelle passed her test. “That was five years ago – at the age of 60,” she chuckles. Paul bought the McQueen rep as a new bike – but his compulsion to modify his machines to way beyond factory spec soon took hold. The original engine was replaced by a TR6 unit that had seen service in an American chopper – and, as with all his bikes, Paul really went to town on rebuilding it. “It’s called attention to detail,” he smiles. His trademark is fashioning engine joints that are so beautifully flushed off they elevate the powerplants into the realms of sculpture. “Most people buy these Metisses as investments – this model was built as a limited run of 300,” he explains. “But we bought it to use two-up, off road, because it has a dual seat – and that’s what we did for a start. Then Michelle passed her test and wanted to start riding her own bike.” She has graduated from a gorgeous little Tiger Cub to this equally luscious Trophy Trail – a US import that has been treated to the full Paul treatment. The original frame and engine have been used, with the latter vapour blasted and rebuilt in his usual fastidious style. “I stripped off all the desirable bits like the sump guard and sold them for two grand to offset the cost of the build – and took three and a half stone off the bike in the process, helped by fitting ally rims and a custom exhaust” says Paul. “We were riding through Inverness and people doing their shopping were taking pictures of us,” says Michelle, adding: “It’s all about the riding – that’s the reason why Paul does all the work on the bikes.”

‘PAUL’S COMPULSION TO MODIFY HIS MACHINES TO WAY BEYOND FACTORY SPEC SOON TOOK HOLD’

Ian Coggin, 1975 Suzuki GT380

Ian was acting as a marshal at the event – the first time he had ever carried out this duty for the “Wheeltappers and Shunters” (as he affectionately calls the VMCC). He’s had his Suzuki stroker since 2019 and was a distinctive sight on the rally, his h-viz vest flapping in the wind and his GT380 leaving a trail of blue haze for following riders to savour. “It had come from the USA and hadn’t run for over 40 years when it came to the UK. The guy who had it before me had got it running – but it still needed an awful lot of work.” The tank was rough inside and the whole fuel system needed a complete clean-out. “There were numerous applications of my ultrasonic bath,” says Ian. The carburettor was then treated to all-new internals. “Cleaning the carbs took many hours, using a cocktail of chemicals,” he adds, groaning at the memory. He finally got it running well and took it to the Piston Rally in Spain last year, but it was getting more difficult to start. “I was fully aware that the crank seals would need attention, so I got them done this year,” he explains. His to-do list is now: fork seals, headstock bearings and new tyres. “The bike has been brought out of the darkness. I talk to it when I’m riding it,” he reveals. “It’s original and I’ve doubled the milage to 6600 miles now. I’m 64 this year – and I fully intend to wear this bike out!”



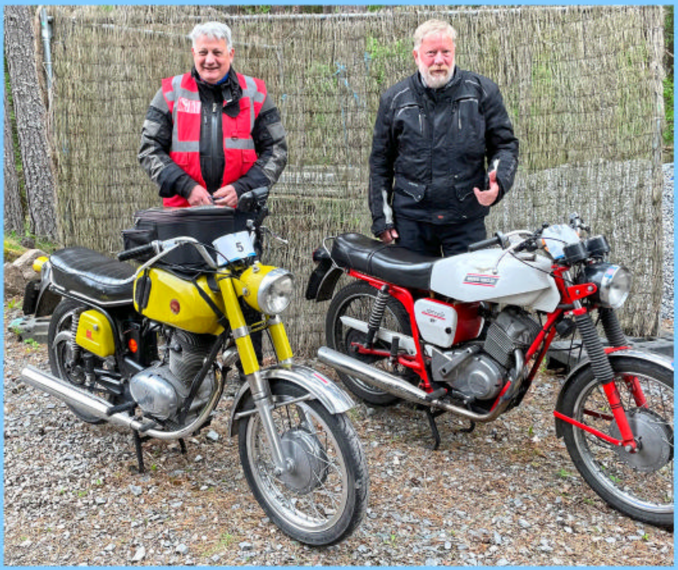


Kiko Costas, 1973 Montesa 250 Rapita

Francisco Javier Mirapeix Costas (or 'Kiko' to his mates) was one of the MC Piston contingent who made the trek from Spain, bringing his groovy Montesa Rapita. He competed for Bultaco in the Spanish trials championships for many years and always fancied a Rapita, but it was a rare bike in Spain as it was aimed at the US market. He finally got the chance 10 years ago, buying this one from a friend who hadn't used it for a while. "Some spares were hard to find – I was very lucky to find this original tank in Barcelona," said Kiko. We caught up with him at a petrol station, carefully measuring out the amount of two-stroke oil to put in the tank. "The bike originally had a premix system, but most owners eliminated that as it was not very well designed," he explained. "I have had some of the best rides of my life up here on the Highland Rally, even though I have to carry a fuel can on the back to make sure I do not run out – the petrol tank only takes nine litres and there are not many petrol stations on these isolated roads! Only 400 of these bikes were produced. It's a precursor of the supermotard style of bike – it's very light, with 30bhp and a good frame, but the brakes are not great," he added.

Kees and Hans Hoofd
1971 Gilera 150 and 1972 Moto Guzzi Stornello 160

Kees (left) and his big brother had ridden all the way from the Netherlands to attend the rally. "We started off at 9am on Friday from near the German border and took the overnight ferry from Ijmuiden to Newcastle which docked on Saturday morning. Then we rode to Kinross, where we stayed the night. We arrived in Strathpeffer on Sunday afternoon." They reckoned that, after completing all the runs on the rally, they would have covered around 2250km (1400 miles) on these plucky little Italian machines by the time they finally got back home. A route majoring on minor roads was planned, although some motorway work had to be endured. "We were cruising at 80kmh (around 50mph) on motorways," said Hans. "We've had no real problems riding these bikes all day. They both have five-speed gearboxes, so there is always a gear available," Kees confirmed. "We did miss a left turn at one point, but the only other issue I've had is with my headlight bulb – it tends to vibrate off, so I had to replace it," added Hans.



John Makinson 1947 Vincent HRD Rapide Series B

"My dad bought this bike in 1969 and it's been in the family ever since," says John. "As a teenager I used to rob it from the garage when he and my mum were out. On one occasion I roared past them as they returned in their car from a night out. When they got back, I claimed I had't taken it, but the red hot exhaust pipe was a dead giveaway." John's been the bike's custodian for the past 25 years. "It was completely restored five years ago by AK Engineering in Southport and I use it on longer rallies." John got a bit more excitement than he bargained for on the rally. "I was doing 70mph down a dual carriageway when the back tyre just exploded – and I had my daughter Isabella on the back!" Thankfully, he managed to wrestle the stricken V-twin to the hard shoulder, incurring no injuries to himself or the young lady. "It was quite an experience!" he said. That considerable understatement could just as well apply to the whole rally itself...

Scrambler unscrambled

A new biography of Dave Bickers celebrates the life of a European Champion who went on to a career as a film stunt man. Mike Jackson has read it and reviews it

I FIRST MET Dave Bickers at a dusty Dunstable gravel-pit scramble in 1957 where we parked our battered Austin A40 pick-ups adjacently. He'd just signed with Greeves, but into his shiny new Thundersley bike had installed the Villiers engine from his previously raced DOT. It was quick for a 197 and upon it he flew, winning two races, plus the main race of the day on his 350 BSA Gold Star. Watching Bickers back then, in full action, was a unique experience; like a Derby jockey, he whipped his bikes along – although seemingly on the verge of frenetic, he rarely fell and was revered by fellow competitors.

I was privileged to bump into David throughout the next half century as he shifted from national scrambler to European motocross champion to bike trader and then film stunt co-ordinator.

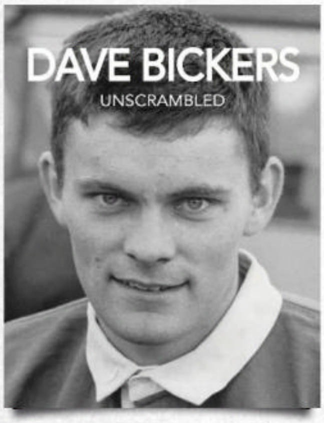
Riding a 250cc Greeves Bickers, he won the 1960 and 1961 European 250 MX Championship. The FIM upgraded this series to 'World' status in 1962, still using the same circuits on which David had won, with virtually the same riders competing. Many thus consider DGB to be a two-time world champ, although he personally never seemed bothered. He also won six British championships, was a regular in those muddy BBC TV *Grandstand* events throughout the '60s and was one of the Europeans who took motocross to America in the early 1970s. From 1966 he rode for CZ, also becoming the Czech manufacturer's UK distributor.

It was in the 1970s, and resulting from a friendship with Bud Ekins, that David began a second career in the film stunt world. Bickers Action Ltd was a business that dovetailed with his inborn mechanical ingenuity and combined with DGB's daredevil persona. Initially, he undertook the riding and driving stunts himself, later devoting his energy to designing and building the ever more complex 'toys' required by the studios. The most famous of these was

March 12, 1972: Dave Bickers gets his 380cc CZ airborne at the Battle of Newbury motocross meeting arguably in *The World is not Enough* when he 'arranged' for a jet powered speedboat to execute a 360° roll on the river Thames. David died in 2014.

Unscrambled, Ian Berry's 290-page biography, is a fine tribute to Dave who, despite his huge success, remained unchanged; inherently helpful, modest, and with an impish sense of humour.

Unscrambled captures this life and career to perfection. The book comprises 90 short chapters, which are effectively descriptive essays – and thanks to the author's skilful touch readers are close witness to innumerable scrapes and unexpected incidents as he travelled and raced within the motocross world, often with rivals and also with old school and village friends.



Unscrambled by Ian Berry is available (£18 soft back, £27 hardback) via **davebickersunscrambled.com**

BAUER AUTOMOTIVE

State of tune

Fun on French grass

This sounds like fun. The Norman Off Road Classic Club are holding a grasstrack sprint for vintage and classic bikes on September 9-10 at Beauval en Caux in northern France (it's just 20 miles south of Dieppe). Entry by invite only (contact **fabrice.norman@orange.fr**) but it'd be great to watch too.

Museum archive goes digital

The National Motorcycle Museum's 5000-item archive of manufacturers' original literature, including manuals and handbooks dating from the 1800s to the 1980s, has now been digitised and items are now available as digital downloads. **nationalmotorcyclemuseum.co.uk**

The Book of the TRIUMPH TWINS
W. C. Haycraft

Streetfighters' favourite returns

Simpson helmets, beloved of streetfighter riders in the 1980s, have introduced a new version of the original design which complies with ECE 22-06 regulations, making them road legal. The RRP of the new Venom helmet is £419.99. **oxfordproducts.com**

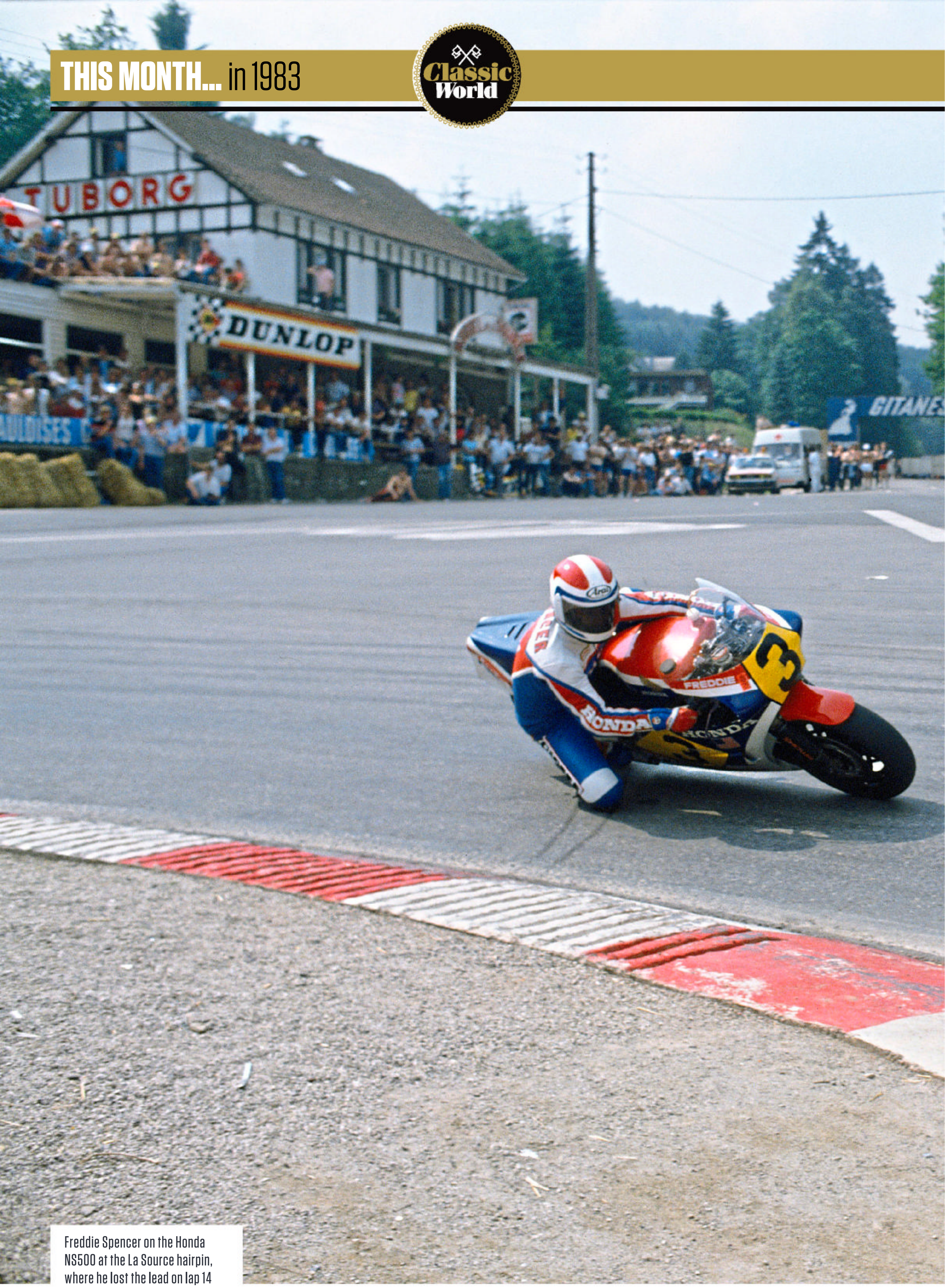
Grahame Rhodes passes

One of classic racing's best liked riders has died aged just 63. Grahame was the winner of the 2006 Senior Classic Manx GP on his own Seeley Matchless, but was equally well known for his exploits on Velocette machinery. *Classic Bike* extends its sympathy to his family.

NEXT MONTH IN Classic Bike

Rick rides...
a Douglas flat-twin (if he can make it work)
Manx Grand Prix winner
How to make a Yamaha XS500 into a racer
Britain's greatest all-round racer
Lunch with the versatile Peter Boast
Iron Curtain cruising
By MZ 250 to Albania. Well, nearly...
Welsh ISDT tribute
Idiots on trail bikes ride the old routes

On sale July 26, 2023


TUBORG
DUNLOP
GITANES
FREDDIE
HONDA
3

Freddie Spencer on the Honda NS500 at the La Source hairpin, where he lost the lead on lap 14

July 3, 1983

Belgian Grand Prix, Spa Francorchamps

The 1983 500cc World Championship was a season-long all-American battle between three-time title winner Kenny Roberts and upstart 21-year-old Freddie Spencer aboard the equally upstart three-cylinder Honda NS500.

Coming into the weekend of the Belgian Grand Prix, Freddie had won five of the first eight races while Roberts had been suffering reliability issues. But at the previous GP at Assen, Roberts had won, thereby eating into Spencer's championship lead – and at Spa they were so close after practice that Freddie's pole position time of 2m 32.7s was just .09s faster than the Yamaha man.

In the race, Spencer had a three-second lead by lap ten, which Kenny cut to just one second by lap 13 before a dramatic pass at the La Source hairpin the following lap. He was 14 seconds clear of the intermittently misfiring Honda at the finish, and claimed the fastest lap as well. Freddie might have lost that battle, but he won the championship.

At the end of the season he won the title by just two points – but they each scored six wins and six pole positions in a 12-race series. It doesn't get much closer than that.

RAY DANIEL

Must see events for July

1-2 **CRMC Snetterton 300**, Snetterton Circuit, Norfolk
crmc.co.uk

1-2 **Wulfsport King of the Castle Motocross**, Farleigh Castle Circuit, Farleigh Hungerford, Somerset
A feast of twinshock motocross action at the legendary circuit.
07887 407590

1 **Vintage Speed Trials**, Grimsthorpe near Bourne, Lincolnshire
Pre-'39 cars and bikes take to the hill at Grimsthorpe Castle in a wonderful evocation of pre-war motorsport in a stunning setting.
speedtrials.co.uk

2 **The Brooklands Motorcycle Show**
Brooklands Museum, Surrey.
Classic bikes galore at the atmospheric home of British motorsport.
brooklandsmuseum.com

7-8 **Beezumph 30**
Anglesey Circuit, North Wales
BSA and Triumph triples in track action on the swooping Anglesey circuit, plus a special celebration of the Triumph Hurricane.
tr3oc.com

7-9 **Dragstalgia**
Santa Pod Raceway, Podington, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire
Hot rods and cars from the golden era of the sport provide the backdrop to an epic retro party.
santapod.co.uk

7-9 **Motorrad Days** Summer Garden, Messe Berlin Trade Fair Grounds, Berlin, Germany
Heaven for BMW fans, this looks like a great excuse to for a long ride-out to one of Europe's great cities on your old airhead.
bmw-motorrad.co.uk

8 **Barton Bike Night**
Town Centre, Barton upon Humber, North Lincolnshire
One of the biggest annual motorcycle nights in the region and always well supported by classic riders.
facebook.com/ BartonBikeNightEvent/

Brooklands: Britain's most atmospheric bike show location

GARY MARGERUM

13-16 **Sunbeam Owners Fellowship 60th Annual Rally**
Asbourne, Derbyshire
A camping weekend for owners of the gentleman's conveyance .
01538 756927

13-16 **Goodwood Festival of Speed**
Goodwood, West Sussex
This year there's a big MotoGP presence on the famous hillclimb.
goodwood.com

14-16 **Belgian Classic Grand Trophy** Chimay Circuit, Belgium
Enjoy amazing road racing action and excellent beer at an amazing track just three hours from Calais.
crmb.be

15-16 **British Historic Racing**
Darley Moor Circuit, Derbyshire
britishhistoricracing.co.uk

15-16 **Mallory Bike Bonanza**
Book your track time in one of the classic parades, or just watch the Masters Parades on Sunday.
malloryparkcircuit.com

15 **Kempton Park Autojumble**
Kempton Park Racecourse, near Sunbury, Middlesex
kemptonautojumble.co.uk

16 **Scooter and Moped Owners Ride In** Sammy Miller Motorcycle Museum, Bashley, Hampshire
Blue smoke and nostalgia.
sammymiller.co.uk

20-23 **Malle Mile Festival**, Grimsthorpe Castle, Lincolnshire.
Motorcycle entertainment and action with a festival atmosphere.
mallelondon.com

22 **South Midlands Autojumble**
Ross-on-Wye Livestock Centre, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire
southmidlandsautojumble.com

22 **Percy Duff Barbon Speed Hillclimb**
Kirkby Lonsdale, Cumbria
A host of weird and wonderful classic machinery shows the modern bikes how it's done.
westmorlandmotorclub.com

22 **Squires Café Autojumble**
Sherburn in Elmet, West Yorkshire.
A morning stop off on your way to Scarborough for the racing.
squires-cafe.co.uk

22-23 **Barry Sheene Classic**, Olivers Mount, Scarborough, North Yorkshire
Classic and modern bikes plus sidecars at the UK's only public road circuit. Get to Yorkshire and enjoy it while you still can.
243racing.co.uk

23 **Honda Owners Club Classic Bike Day**. Sammy Miller Motorcycle Museum, Bashley, New Milton, Hampshire
sammymiller.co.uk

29 **Calne Bike Meet**
Calne, Wiltshire
Two-wheelers take over the Wiltshire market town. Always a good turn-out of classics.
calnebikemeet.com

29-30 **CRMC Donington Park National road races**
Donington Park Circuit, Derbyshire
The biggest classic race meet of the year, it's always a good show.
crmc.co.uk

30 **South of England Classic Show and Bike Jumble**
South of England Showground, Ardingly, West Sussex
Usual show stuff, with indoor and outdoor autojumble, trade stands and bikes for sale area.
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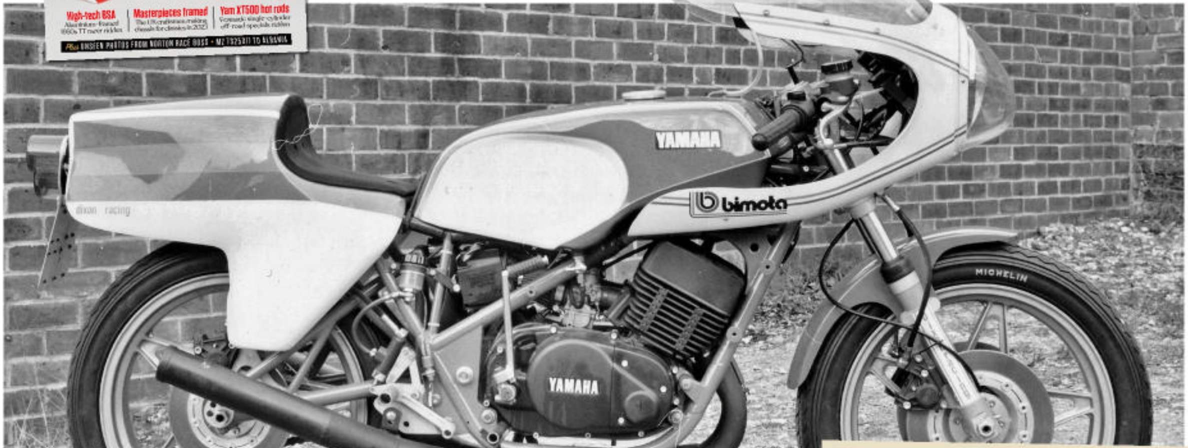

Left: Bimota YB3 as built by Colin Charles in the 1970s

Above: Bimota YB3 as bought by Fedor van de Pol in the 1990s

Hey, that's my bike!

Reader recognises his Bimota project in the pages of *CB*...

It was great to see the Bimota SB2 on the front cover of *Classic Bike*. Thank you so muchfor your article on Bimota's 50th anniversary. It is a real pity that the factory does not organise a special event to mark this occasion. The 25th anniversary was brilliant, with many of their early racing bikes present.

In the article, I was delighted to see a photograph of this particular Bimota YB3. As you will have seen, it is not an 'ordinary' Bimota racing bike, but has lights and a licence plate. Dixon Racing sold KB1s, SB2s and SB3s with their Yoshimura tuning parts, and also had this YB3 chassis kit for sale. It cost £2300 and did not sell. Dixon Racing's workshop foreman, Colin Charles, then used the chassis kit to build the custom street bike with an RD400 engine as shown in the photograph.

I was fortunate to come across this bike 30 years ago. It has suffered very badly in the hands of previous owners, also having been crashed at least once. The fuel tank was dented, the seat cut back, the top half of the fairing was gone, crank missing, aluminium discs corroded, and the frame was welded. Despite it not being in the best of condition to put it mildly, and expensive for a damaged basket case too, it is a unique motorcycle and I could not let the opportunity pass by. Unfortunately, it is still awaiting restoration. At the time I got married, was looking to buy a house, then moved three times since, so all that did not help – but I'm sure that you have heard it all before.

I will put a copy of the photograph from the magazine on the garage wall, so that I am constantly reminded to get started on the bike!

Fedor van de Pol, Holland

Thirty years? Come on Fedor, we want to see the bike finished and back on the road. Let us know when it's done. Who else has a project that's taking even longer to complete? HW

DB2 defence

Whilst your article celebrating Bimota's 50th was entertaining, I disagree with the insinuation that the DB2 was a failure and 'no improvement on the 900SS'. To quote from *Superbike* magazine of November 1992, the DB2 weighed 33lb less than the 900SS and 18lb less than the Ducati Superlight, giving a very light weight of 370lb.

The lightly modded 900SS engine (airbox and exhaust with Ducati 916-style twin underseat exits) gave 75bhp with loads of torque in a chassis with sharper steering geometry, shorter wheelbase, 50/50 weight distribution, adjustable forks and Ohlins rear suspension. Add top-notch big Brembo brakes and wheels with 'striking bodywork and meticulous detailing' especially the alloy parts and carbon mudguard.

Compared to the agility and midrange of the standard 900SS, the DB2 is 'outstanding' and 'pulls harder' and 'feels faster with a superbly balanced feel' and has 'flawless stability'. 'Grip and ground clearance was immense' and finally 'as a real-world sports bike, it was magnificent and has few equals'

So, no improvement over the donor bike? What else could Bimota have done while keeping the engine fairly standard? Obviously with less weight and some more power in a well sorted chassis, it could only be defined as being better.

Anyway, keep up the good work. I think that the balance of articles in *Classic Bike* is about right.

Tom O'Neil

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YOUR LETTERS

Classic World

NORTON'S SECRET HISTORY

Legendary Norton race boss Joe Craig amassed a collection of photographs during his three decades at the top. Here, seen for the first time, are a selection

I saw Guthrie at the TT

Two items in the June 2023 *Classic Bike* compel me to write to you. Am I the last person alive to have seen Jimmy Guthrie (page 54) riding in the TT? He was my very first hero. I was at every TT from 1936 until 1950, except for 1947 when I was taking the School Certificate. I cannot forget that devastating morning when, coming down to breakfast, my father told me of Guthrie's death.

Another sad memory relating to pre-war TTs was standing next to the grandstand in 1939 as my father urged on Freddy Frith, to no avail. And then watching the hoisting of the swastika. My father said he doubted there would be a 1940 TT.

Post-war we watched Les Graham pass us on the Porcupine below Kate's Cottage on his way for an outstanding win, only to be told as we walked down to the Creg that he had broken down. Very few had mobile radios in those days with their valves and heavy batteries.

So to the second item (page 12). In 1950 I was at Governor's Bridge for the Junior, as Geoff Duke glided through whilst Artie Bell fought. I am convinced Duke could have had that race, but Juniors were intended for Bell. Sadly Bell was soon to have a serious accident, so Duke went on to win both Juniors and Seniors.

Harry Johnson

Are there any CB readers with TT memories that go back as far as Harry's? Get in touch, we'd love to hear from you. HW

Above: Jimmy Guthrie (20) in last month's *CB*. More about the book that provided the picture above at joecraignorton.com

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The 'season' to be folly?

I've just read the June copy of *Classic Bike* and I'm a bit grumpy!

Not with the content or the bikes; Rick is a favourite closely followed by Hugo's exploits on his Matchless and the article on the three XT Yamaha variants. I was also enthralled by Harry Bott's expedition on his MZ, the report on the Westmorland club's three-day run (I'm off to the Lakes in a couple of weeks on my 1993 Suzuki GN250) and the buyer's guide to K100s as I've had a few of those.

So what made me grumpy? The term 'riding season' was used twice – I think this term should be banned in all two-wheeled publications, as it represents an attitude to bikes which I find deplorable. For 50 years I have used my bikes year-round, as I have loved every one of them (admittedly some more than others). They were all primarily transport for adventures, commutes, family visits and competitions – all of which were made on my bikes during the whole of the year and mostly still are (although I must admit that ice or

Right: Classic Bike out and about in the riding season – January 2023

MALCOLM PELMEAR

frost stop me these days, as I don't bounce as well as I used to).

What happened to articles on winter preparation? Do people stop going to places on their bikes in bad weather? Is hibernation a part of modern motorcycling?

Thanks, though, for keeping old bikes in the public eye and giving encouragement to young people who are the future of the old bike world.

Ian Smith

The frame game

As an owner of an original first-year C&J TT500 and Dick Mann (DMS) Mk4, I enjoyed the article on both frame builds (*CB* June issue). However, you were slightly off with your C&J dating. Having been making frames for the Honda 250/350 hopped-up singles, C&J were early in the game with a TT500 variant. My frame is identical to the one in the feature and pretty much as the day it was built up. It's a '76 with its original nine inches of fork travel. From the available sources, it appears that only between six and 12 of this style may have been built. The frames were not particularly light, being produced with desert racing in mind. The frames were longer and taller in '77, with no rear loop.

The DMS Mk1s came with one of two lengths of swingarm – shorter for woods and longer for the desert. My Mk4 is basically the DMS Honda XR500 frame and swingarm with a built-in oil tank added.

Jez (Jeremy Atkinson)

PS I am also the owner of the magazine's BSA M21 project bike from 2010. It is just about debugged now. Rick did a nice job on the engine.

Back in the right place

I'm 'only' 46 years old, so started riding when I was 16 in 1993, when I had a fifth-hand Kawasaki AR50, and then a much fitter (only one previous owner) Suzuki RG125.

When I went to university, I drifted away from bikes, though I never lost interest. Then I did the inevitable and bought an RG125 project which I've fixed up. That somehow led to me buying a 1973 Triumph 500 last year – and its been an amazing experience.

I've loved learning about imperial fasteners and Zener diodes, and I've loved meeting encouraging, helpful and welcoming people. I just wanted to say thanks to the whole of the classic bike scene for being such a great place to be.

Luke Davies

Show us yours

Classic Bike **readers share news of recent acquisitions, regular rides and progress of ongoing projects**

JOHN CASSIDY

My Norton dream has finally come true

I bought my first Dommi 88 in 1963, when I was earning just £2 10s per week. Then, 59 years later, I finally got the bike of my dreams. This one was bought as a rolling chassis two years ago. I've had the frame powder coated, new alloy rims, a twin-leading-shoe front brake and a 750 Atlas engine and gearbox bought through eBay. It was sold as a runner, but when I checked it, I found it was full of diesel oil and rust. It's had a total rebuild: crank, barrel, head and mains, new oil pump and a mod to stop the dreaded wet sumping – a valve fitted in the timing cover by Norvil of Burntwood. I fitted a new Boyer ignition system and a new LED lighting system and indicators. I must say a great big thanks to Norvil (Les and Gareth) for their help and advice on all parts of this build.

John Cassidy

Bought brand new and still a distinguished ride

After reading the article in CB's May issue on tips for a top T140, I couldn't help but show it to as many people I could. That's because my name is the same as the guy giving the tips – Andy Orton. I have never restored a T140 – but I have owned a T140D for the last 43 years. At the age of 19, I bought it brand new and it's still going strong. I did the Distinguished Gentleman's Ride on it on May 21. Can't wait for each month's issue to come through the door. Keep up the great work you're all doing.

Andy Orton

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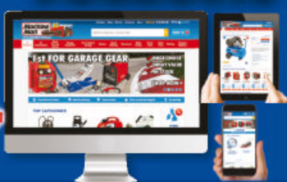

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CSA12F 12 tonne floor*#	£379.00	£454.80
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CDP102B	350/5	£115.95	£139.14
CDP152B	450/12	£209.98	£251.98
CDP202B	450/16	£269.00	£322.80
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DEALS ON WHEELS

Brilliant buys to get you on the road this summer!

WORDS: GEZ KANE PHOTOGRAPHY: BAUER AUTOMOTIVE

Kawasaki ZX-7R

Triumph Bonneville

PHOTOGRAPHY: BAUER AUTOMOTIVE, GREG MOSS, STUART COLLINS & SIMON LEE

DEALS ON WHEELS

Brilliant buys to get you on the road this summer!

Weren't aware that you wanted a blue seat? Maybe this 1991 GSX600F-M will change your mind...

BAUER AUTOMOTIVE

Under £1000

Suzuki GSX600F

1988-2001 • 599cc • 80bhp • 197kg • 125mph

Buying a good, useable road bike at under a grand involves patience or luck. Set your sights too high and be prepared for disappointment. Select carefully and good machines can be had – and 1980s and 1990s middleweights are a target-rich environment.

Sure, Honda CBR600s are brilliant, and there's lots out there, and Yamaha FZ600s are fun – but at under a grand those two models would need work, so look for less fashionable machinery

We've always had a soft-spot for Suzuki's GSX600F. When new they were overshadowed in every 600s group test, but 30 years later the slight deficiencies in finish, handing and performance compared to period opposition are almost irrelevant. The used bike's tyres, shock absorber and aftermarket exhaust (because it'll certainly have one, possibly along with a tinted screen, coloured handlebar grips and other period accessories) are going to be what defines its on-the-road performance and feel.

And realistically, what's not to like about a 130mph motorcycle with a GSX-R750 derived oil/air-cooled engine that was nicknamed 'Teapot'?

True, it's peaky (and that aftermarket pipe may have exacerbated this) with proper power starting at around 7000rpm and tailing off after maximum output at 11,000rpm. And the fairing's not the best, but what were you expecting? Here's a do-it-all motorcycle on which you could ride (two-up if you like) to Scotland or the shops. A 4.4-gallon tank gives it proper range.

Introduced in 1988, there were slight updates for '89 and '94, and then a significant makeover for 1998. Wheels are 17in, which means there's a decent choice of modern rubber, and the engine was also used in the 600 Bandit and GSX-R, so parts availability is good should anything dramatic go wrong.

The '98 update improved the bike's midrange, but the restyle included a distinctive 'Baboon's bum' tail. On looks alone we'd go for the earlier bike – there are limits...

The simple fact is that the GSX (see also ZZ-R, SV, FZS, FJ, GSX-S, etc) that you buy for budget money should be in far better nick than a CBR or FZ at the same price. And you're buying to ride, not restore. Right?

If I had £1000...

We all need a silly moped and they don't get much sillier than a Velo Solex. Built in France between 1946-88, spares are dirt cheap, there's a UK owners club (velosolexclubuk.com) and you should be able to find a decent runner for £750-1000. Just the job for pottering round town or enjoying other pedal-assisted entertainments. **Hugo Wilson, Editor**

BONHAMS AUCTIONEERS

Under £2000

Yamaha TY250 Mono

TY250R • 1983-1991 • 246cc • 16bhp • 83kg • 60mph (est)

Trials is one of the cheapest ways of getting your two-wheeled competition kicks. And with an increasing number of classic trials running an air-cooled monoshock class, the TY250 makes a strong claim to be the trials bike in your shed.

The TY mono was introduced for the 1984 season and changed the face of trials like no other machine since the Bultaco Sherpa T. Within a year, all the other major players on the trials scene had rushed out single shock models of their own. Ride a TY and you'll discover why.

Even now, it feels a world away from even the best twinshock– the TY feels like a bicycle in comparison. It's slim, light (a claimed 183lb in competition R model form) and as long as the rear shock and linkage have been looked after, the suspension feels way more supple, forgiving and capable of soaking up big hits.

The forks are as good as the best of the rest from the mid-'80s too, while the engine delivers plenty of smooth power from right off the bottom. Even the brakes work well, and if you can find a later, 1991/92 model, you'll have the benefit of a front disc stopper. Only top riders will be left wanting a little more power. And, if you do want a bit more go as your riding improves, there are plenty of aftermarket upgrades available from an impressive array of TY specialists. Factory development rider Nigel Birkett still stocks genuine and pattern TY spares and offers specialised workshop services including porting, barrel and piston work (birkettmotosport.som).

"The TY250R changed trials overnight," says the Cumbrian ace. "It was the first production monoshock trials bike and is still one of the best and easiest bikes to ride. It would make a great first machine for classic trials. And you can still pick them up for under £2000 – for the moment."

Cambridge Trials Centre have built up a great reputation for both their own TY parts and their workshop (cambridgetrialscentre.com).

The TY Mono is a great way in to the world of classic trials – and at reasonable cost. Parts are readily available and reasonably priced – and there's probably a trial on near you this weekend. What are you waiting for?

If I had £2000...

I know Honda SL175s are thin on the ground, but a couple sold at auction recently at under two grand. I'm a sucker for Honda street scramblers, but SL350 prices mean they're out of reach, so a little SL175 would be just the job for ambling round the Lincolnshire lanes until I get my TL125 up and running.

Gez Kane, Contributor

BAUER AUTOMOTIVE

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216
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Nigel Birkett threads his TY through the boulders in the 1984 Scottish Six Days Trial. Now doesn't that look like fun?

DEALS ON WHEELS

Brilliant buys to get you on the road this summer!

Under £3000

Kawasaki ZX-7R

1996-2003 • 748cc • 123bhp • 203kg • 165mph

Looking for maximum performance for minimum outlay? The ZX-7's hard to beat

Whether you feel that '90s sports bikes are right at the epicentre of the new wave of classics or that they're just slightly older modern bikes, there's no denying that machines like Kawasaki's ZX-7 offer superb value for money and plenty of bang for your buck on the road. And, with the model having been dropped 20 years ago, surely the case for this model attaining classic status gets ever more compelling.

What the ZX-7 brings to the party – for a bargain price – is genuine sporting performance. Its 160mph top end is all (and probably more) than you're ever going to need, the handling is stable and predictable and the brakes are awesome (by classics standards anyway). Reliability is what you'd expect from Kawasaki, too. Buy a good one for around £3000 (rather than a ropey example for £2000) and simply enjoy.

If I had £3000...

I'd find a really nice Honda VFR750. The VFR engine is genuinely exotic and delivers modern bike performance in an '80s package – yet still with a slightly raw feel. I'm not one for fairings as a rule, but I'll make an exception for the VFR. A great ride, great sound and a great bike.

John Naish, Contributor

HONDA

Under £4000

AJS & Matchless singles

G3LS • 1949-1966 • 347cc • 19bhp • 179kg • 75mph (est)

The epitome of the traditional British thumper and the ideal introduction to Brit bike ownership. Whether badged AJS or Matchless, these delightful singles may not be the fastest thing on the road, but they are dependable, relaxing to ride and solidly built. And, with a great owners club and first-class spares back-up, you'll be able to spend the summer riding rather than fettling.

The 350cc versions from both marques seem to be easier to find and appreciably cheaper to buy than the 500s which may just stretch our budget a little. But even a 350 will thump along happily at 60mph – perfect for a bit of back road exploring.

• Turn to page 97 for our AMC Singles buyers guide.

BONHAMS AUCTIONEERS

AMC singles have a Cinderella image but you can have a ball on these thumpers

If I had £4000...

I'm a big fan of the desert sled scene and off road Triumphs, so a trials Triumph Tiger Cub or Mountain Cub is what I'd go for. One of these would be great for riding around the badly-surfaced back lanes and local bridleways around my Rutland home in the summertime.

Austin Smith, Art Director

Under £5000

Honda CB400F

1975-1978 • 408cc • 37bhp • 184kg • 102mph

Honda's CB400F is one of Britain's best loved Japanese classics. Who says so? David Silver, a man who's sold more parts for classic Hondas than probably anyone else in the country. The virtues that made Honda's smallest-capacity UK-market four so popular back in the day are what keeps it in the hearts of its many devotees.

"We sell more parts for CB400Fs than for any other Honda," he confirms. "It ticks a lot of boxes for a lot of people. Although the bike was only available for four years, it really did well – especially in the UK. It was the first bike Honda styled with the European market in mind. It just looks right. It's also relatively easy to restore. We can supply just about everything to rebuild one or keep it on the road and looking good. Keep the front brake caliper pivot and camchain adjuster bolt greased, change the oil and filter regularly and you shouldn't have much trouble."

Smaller, lighter and more nimble than the headline-grabbing big-bore fours from Japan, and considerably more affordable than most of them, the 400 Four still offers ton-plus performance, plus nippy acceleration if you use the six-speed gearbox and get the revs heading towards the 10,000rpm redline. It's also super smooth and handles well. It might not be the lightest or fastest of the '70s 400s, but it feels simultaneously sophisticated and exciting with the engine spinning over 6500rpm. Maximum power (37bhp) arrives at 8500rpm, so there's no real need to push it all the way into the red.

It's a great looking bike too. The sensuous curves of the exhaust downpipes may be the highlight of the bike's design, but the understated café racer styling adopted across the whole machine has certainly stood the test of time.

Changes to the CB400F throughout its all-too-brief production life were minimal. First-year 1975 F models have the pillion footrests mounted on the swingarm, while 1976 models have them mounted on a loop coming off the rear subframe and have a locking fuel cap. The 1977 F is unchanged and the final 1978 F2 version features revised paintwork and graphics and longer cylinder head studs were fitted mid-season. You can buy a good example of whichever model you fancy for £4500-5000.

If I had £5000...

A Morini 3½ would be perfect for my favourite events, like the Piston Rally – enough power to handle steep ascents, but not too heavy and a tidy handler round mountain hairpins. I love V-twins and those Heron heads give it an air of distinction – it's a real eye-catcher too. A mate of mine has just bought a very tidy 1976 Strada for £4250 – he got a good deal there. Jealous? Me? Of course not...

Mark Holmes, Production Editor

JOHN NOBLE

Those sexy downpipes are worth the price alone, but there's so much more to the 400 Four

Under £6000

Honda VFR400R NC30

1988-1994 • 399cc • 60bhp • 175kg • 128mph

I know, I know, you can pick one up for £3000-4000. But look at them. All pattern bodywork and garish paint jobs. The jewel-like VFR400R (NC30), produced from 1998-94, is one of those bikes that will reward a stretched budget. Go for a bike with original panels and paint, low mileage and a sweet-sounding engine and you won't regret it.

You'll be buying some of the best handling you'll find on a road-legal motorcycle, engineering and finish from Honda's golden age of build quality and sensational looks. Not a bad combination. An NC30 will reward and engage a good rider and flatter an average one. And, while it is a compact machine, it's not so small that a six-footer can't enjoy its attractions.

The NC30's 399cc engine might 'only' produce 60bhp and it isn't the fastest of the crop of '80s/'90s 400 race reps, but the flat torque curve makes it feel like a bigger engine and gives an easier ride on the road than you might expect from a machine that will rev to 14,500rpm. It's a deceptively quick bike with a top end around 125mph and the ability to carry improbable corner speed.

Problems are relatively rare, provided the bike has remained in standard tune,despite the sophistication of the NC30. The carbs need to be set up properly to get the best from it and regular oil and filter changes are a must, too.

Rick Oliver (rickoliver.co.uk) makes his living providing parts (genuine and aftermarket), upgrades and advice to NC30 owners. And he's owned his own 1989 model since 1992. "It's the real thing," he explains. "The 400 class was created for the Japanese home market and all the manufacturers took it very seriously. The NC30 really is a mini RC30. It may not have been built by HRC, but it's very well built. An NC30 provides a very involving ride and there's a great support network for parts and upgrades. It's an easy bike to own and enjoy."

Certainly, if you've always lusted after an RC30 but can't stretch to the £25,000-plus price tag, its little brother is well worth considering.

It might not have the outright performance of the 750cc V4, but it's lighter, handles just as well and you can enjoy the hypnotic flat drone of the exhaust note for around £5500-6000. And, if you ever tire of thrashing it round fast, twisty roads (which you almost certainly won't), you can just park it up in the shed and look at it.

If I had £6000...

I'd buy a Yamaha TDR250 .In fact I have – two of them. Prices are on the up, but I reckon you could buy a good, solid bike for £6000. They're light, flexible and fun and there's decent parts back-up - and it's getting better all the time.There's a company producing 3-D printed bodywork for them, for example. I rode my standard bike to Porto and back without a hint of trouble, so reliability shouldn't be an issue.
Alan Seeley, Contributor

YAMAHA

DEALS ON WHEELS
Brilliant buys to get you on the road this summer!

Don't worry – kneesliders that look like fruit jellies are not mandatory when riding an NC30

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Under £7000

Triumph 650 Bonneville

1963-1975 • 649cc • 46bhp • 182kg • 110mph (est)

In the ideal world, everyone would own a Triumph twin at least once in their life. The Meriden twins are perennially cool, stunningly good looking and a blast to ride – especially in 650cc form. And top of the tree is the T120 Bonneville.

Launched in 1959 to cash in on the speed record-breaking exploits of Texan Johnny Allen on Bonneville salt flats in 1956, the Bonneville – essentially a tuned twin-carb version of the popular T110 Tiger – swiftly became one of the most sought-after machines on the road. A new unit-construction engine appeared for 1963, and while a pre-unit model would almost certainly break a £7k budget, prices of unit construction Bonnies have steadied a bit of late, offering the chance to own the glamour-boy of Triumph's '60s line-up to more of us.

Listening to a good Bonnie is almost as good as riding one. The exhaust note from the 360° engine is a delicious hard-edged rasp and the experience only gets better when you're behind the 'bars. Wind open the throttle out of a bend and feel the exhilarating zip of the punchy parallel twin as it launches you towards the next bend. Brake, pitch into the next bend – and repeat.

Buy a unit Bonnie. Own an icon.

> 'The Meriden twins are perennially cool, stunningly good looking and a blast to ride'

If I had £7000...

I'd have a BSA A65 Spitfire. I just love the clean lines – to me, they're the best looking of all the BSA twins and they still look great today. A late US-market model would be ideal, but all A65s are well supported by the classic trade and parts are easy to find. They were a little bit special in the day and I think they still are.
Richard Fincher, Contributor

JOHN NOBLE & SIMON LEE

DEALS ON WHEELS
Brilliant buys to get you on the road this summer!

JASON CRITCHELL

Under £8000

Norton Commando

(750) 1967-1977 • 745cc • 65bhp (claimed) • 190kg • 115mph

Commando fans reckon that this is the ultimate development of the British parallel twin concept. And, although they might be biased, they might just be right too. Though the Commando's engine is based heavily on the old Atlas design (with the improvement of a stronger, diaphragm clutch) it's the innovative Isolastic frame that lifts it clear of its rivals. The swingarm pivots on the engine and both are isolated from the main frame loop (and rider) by rubber-bushed mountings. The result? All the virtues of a big-bore parallel-twin engine without the usual vibration. Riding a well sorted 750 Roadster on a twisty road is one of the great experiences in motorcycling.

There's great specialist support for the model and a load of upgrades are available too; its actually hard to find a bike that hasn't been 'improved' in some way. With plenty of bikes out there, don't rush into buying. Avoid Combat-engined models and buy a great Commando for between £8000 and £9000 to find out what all the fuss is about.

If I had £8000...

I'd buy a Yamaha RD350LC. They're brilliant bikes – fun, simple, and in my eyes one of the most beautiful bikes ever built. I've got a real soft spot for them. I've raced one and I'd love to have one in the garage again. I know prices have shot up in the last few years – but if you can afford one, buy one. If you like two-strokes, you won't regret it.
Jim Moore, Contributor

Under £9000

Ducati 851

1987-1992 • 851cc • 102bhp • 210kg • 160mph

If you fancy a bit of hardcore Ducati sports action for an affordable price, 851 is the number to go for

JASON CRITCHELL

With its all-new liquid-cooled engine with four-valve cylinder heads and a trellis type frame, Ducati's 851 marked the dawn of a new generation of bikes from Bologna. More than that, though, it represents the beginning of a shift from Ducati being fringe players on the sports bike scene to becoming one of the major forces.

The 851 also provides a sublime riding experience. True, the first 1987 versions with 16in wheels were less than perfect handlers, but get on board a 1989-on Strada model with 17in wheels and you'll see what all the fuss is about. Like most sporting Ducatis, the 851 is not flawless. Some suffer with reliability issues and all are hardcore, focused sports bikes rather than practical all-rounders. No matter. Perhaps it's time you spent a summer with one.

If I had £9000...

I might consider a Velocette Venom. Forget all the 'engineers' bike' stuff, they're just well-made and probably the best British big single for the sustained speeds needed on today's big roads. With loads of useful upgrades available they make a very practical rider's bike.
Rick Parkington

DEALS ON WHEELS
Brilliant buys to get you on the road this summer!

Kawasaki's forced-induction GPz750 is the turbo that makes most sense (if that's not an oxymoron)

BONHAMS AUCTIONEERS

Under £10,000

Kawasaki 750 Turbo

1983-85 • 736cc • 110bhp • 233kg • 144mph

We're not sure why any right-thinking human being wouldn't want to own a motorcycle that features forced induction and has the insane performance whoosh and the 'Turbo' sticker that comes with it. Of the limited choices available to turbo seekers, the Kawasaki 750 is indisputably the best.

Based around Kawasaki's excellent GPz750, a great balance of performance and agility, the Turbo arrived in 1984. That was after Honda, Suzuki and Yamaha had launched their own forced induction models – but the Kawasaki's extra development time really shows.

In August 1984 it was tested by *Motorcycle Mechanics*, delivering a 144mph top speed and 11.3sec standing quarter. That was significantly faster than its rivals, but also delivered in a package that handled better, fuelled better, and had a more satisfying but entirely manageable turbo whoosh to its power delivery.

Despite being a great bike, this was a short-lived model. It was overshadowed by the arrival of the next generation of liquid-cooled sports bikes starting with the GPz900R that arrived in the same year as the Turbo – which was discontinued after two years.

Forty years later, while supply is limited there seem to be plenty on the market if you are prepared to shop internationally. Ten grand gets you a decent example, though sellers may ask more for a minter. Measured against the value of early Zed Ones, now nudging into the high twenties, that looks like very good value.

How to buy a good one? You need a test ride to ensure that the power is delivered smoothly, with no glitches from the fuel injection and no smoke from the exhaust that could spell engine or turbo aggravation. Worn shock absorbers and suspension linkages will spoil the riding experience, but are easily sorted. Approach project bikes with extreme caution – remember that you're buying to ride now, so that you can be at your local bike meet in August.

Go on, have yourself a turbocharged summer.

If I had £10,000...

I'd go for a Ducati 916 Biposto. While 916 variants such as the Senna, SPS and Foggy Replica have headed into the financial stratosphere, there are still 916s around for £10,000 – mostly early Bipostos (ie with a pillion seat). They're still utterly bewitching to ride and look at, and won't stay long at this money. Get it bought.
John Westlake, Contributor

Classic Bike
100s OF BIKES FOR SALE IN CB READER ADS
SEE PAGE 107

Market movements this summer

The classic bike market is always in a state of flux, with some eras of machine in demand as the people who wanted those bikes new reach a certain age, and a certain level of prosperity. A few years back, you could buy three Laverda Jotas for the cost of a good Gold Star. Now you probably need a Goldie and a half for a Jota. And who are we to judge on £6000 Yamaha FS-1Es?

Currently looking like decent value are British bikes from the 1950s, '60s and early '70s, with Triumph 650 twins, Norton Commandos and BSA Gold Stars as standout examples. Twenty years ago these were blue-chip classics, but prices haven't risen for a while and may actually have started to drop away as the spunky youngsters who owned them new, then bought them back and restored them in their middle age are now thinning their collections rather than accumulating more machines. They all offer fantastic riding experiences and are great things to have in the garage.

The other place where there is still real value is amongst the bikes of the 1980s and '90s. Sure, Honda RC30s, early Suzuki GSX-Rs and two-strokes have gone into orbit – but there is still a lot of great stuff here amongst the cheap hacks. The Kawasaki ZX-7R, Suzuki TL1000S and Yamaha TRX850 all look like solid buys for middling money. There are plenty of others.

But remember – if you're buying in July, you're buying to ride now. Be prepared to pay a bit more to get a good, useable bike – and expect to ride it home from the dealer or vendor's home.

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INTERVIEW: JOHN WESTLAKE

PHOTOGRAPHY: NORMAN HYDE ARCHIVE, JOHN WESTLAKE & BAUER AUTOMOTIVE

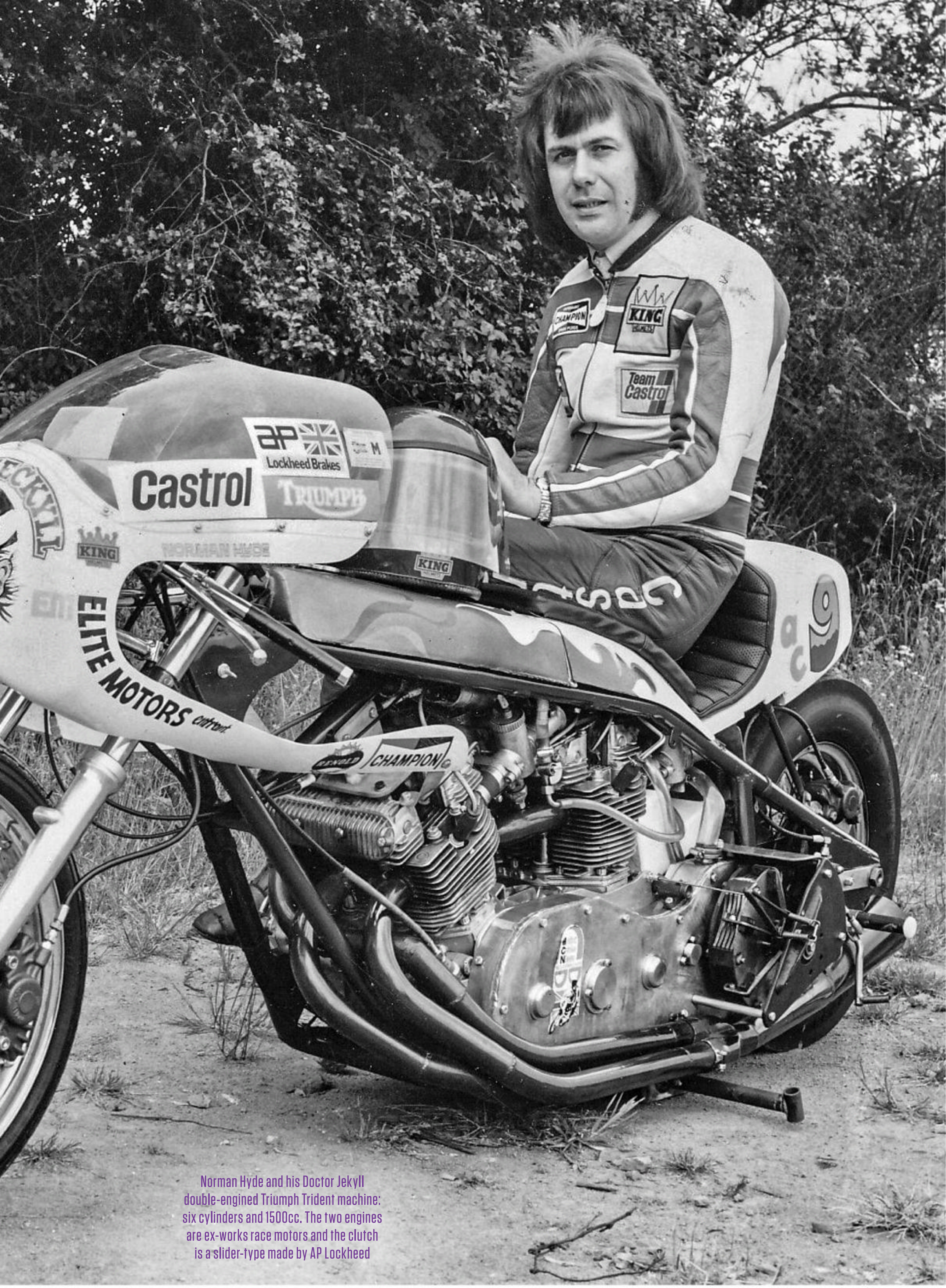
Classic Bike AT LUNCH WITH...

Norman Hyde

He worked for Doug Hele at Meriden, started a parts empire and broke multiple speed records. And he's not slowing down...

When famed motorcycle engineer, entrepreneur and multiple world speed record holder Norman Hyde was an apprentice at Meriden, he asked to borrow a bike for the weekend. "Be careful with it," said the manager, handing over a Trophy. "It's Steve McQueen's." Alas, the young Hyde didn't take quite the care Steve would have liked and, when riding back to the factory, he let a Tiger Cub flywheel that was stuffed up his jacket slip down and scratch the tank.

"I was crapping myself," says Norman as he awaits an intriguing lamb dish at a gastro pub round the corner from his home near Warwick. "But they said: 'Don't worry, kid – we'll stick another one on'." When you were working in a factory producing 1000 bikes a week, that sort of thing clearly wasn't a big deal back then. "In fact, if you wanted a petrol tank for your own bike, you'd go along to the tank department and ask if they had any scratched ones. The bloke would say: 'What colour do you want?' and then he'd scratch one of those and give it to you. If you were interested in bikes, it was fantastic. BSA was much, much worse, mind you – dealers could get a van-full of parts for £10 there."


Castrol
AP Lockheed Brakes
TRIUMPH
KING
NORMAN HYDE
ELITE MOTORS
CHAMPION
Team Castrol

Norman Hyde and his Doctor Jekyll double-engined Triumph Trident machine: six cylinders and 1500cc. The two engines are ex-works race motors and the clutch is a slider-type made by AP Lockheed

During his 11 years at Triumph, Norman saw plenty of these sort of shenanigans that surely contributed to the company’s demise, plus – at the other end of the spectrum – engineering talent that verged on genius. But let’s start with the problematic stuff. “Lots of the horizontal milling machines were so worn that the lead screws would go three forward and one back, so you ended up with a casting with a machined area with a big burr on the end,” says the 78-year-old, cutting a dapper figure in his sports jacket and Triumph Owners Club tie (he’s the patron).

“That was fixed on the fraising bench, where they filed these burrs off – 1000 engines a week, so there was a lot of filing. There were probably 10 people doing that. You have to remember that the factory was built using old machinery in the middle of World War II. When I started, some of the machinery was pre-World War I – the Triumph twin barrels were bored on them.”

Despite the old kit, Norman was smitten with the place and had only one ambition – to work in the Experimental Department, where Doug Hele led the company’s brightest engineers and built some of the world’s finest road and racing motorcycles. “That was the pinnacle. I was doing a three-year sandwich course – six months at the factory followed by six months at Lanchester College of Technology [now Coventry University] and was doing a few sprints in my spare time. I really wanted to join the Experimental Department as soon as possible.”

Norman’s underselling himself with the phrase ‘doing a few sprints’ – by 23 he was breaking world records. As a youngster he’d joined a local motorcycle club and started competing in trials, but was immediately successful at sprinting. “I’d ride my Tiger 100 to a sprint, do a few starts and ride home. In the first year I came second in the 500 production class in 16.1 seconds and in the second year I adapted the head for two carbs and came first with 15.1 seconds.”

After that he got more serious, turning a crashed Tiger Cub into a dedicated sprint bike. “I got it bored out to 242cc so it was basically a liner with fins on, had a frame made and fitted a front wheel from a BSA Beagle.” The Cub revved to 10,000rpm and was competitive, but as Norman became more immersed in the sprinting world, he noticed an interesting anomaly: “I saw that the 500, 750 and 1000s were all supercharged twins, but the 350s weren’t, so I thought: ‘Right, supercharged 350 twin it is,’ and built one.”

Norman had also become aware of the fact that the 350 sidecar records had all been set pre-WWII, so he quickly built an outfit for his new engine and took the kilometre and quarter-mile standing-start world records in 1968.

“The following year, I made it a 500 and took the standing kilometre record held by the works Gilera ridden by Florin Camathias [the GP and TT-winning sidecar rider], who was one of my heroes – his wagon broke down once on the way to the TT and he wheeled his outfit out of the back and rode it to the Isle of Man. What a man. Anyway, I was delighted to beat his record.”

‘A LOT OF STUFF WRITTEN ABOUT TRIUMPH DEVELOPMENTS IS PLAIN WRONG’

Norman also took the standing mile record – beating an NSU 500 – then moved on to a 750cc triple and 1000cc sidecar to break yet more world records. But we’re getting ahead of ourselves. Safe to say that, when he went for his interview with Doug Hele, Norman was quietly confident that the great man would be interested – and perhaps even impressed – by his DIY engine tuning skills.

“I took along some pictures of my sprint bike to the interview, but Doug was quite perturbed. I didn’t realise he had lots of experience of his staff worrying about their own machines rather than thinking about the day job. It nearly put him off, but thankfully he decided to take me on as an assistant development engineer.

“I was awestruck to start with. Doug was unique in lots of ways. He was very fastidious, for example, and when he rode he’d wear rubber rings cut out of inner tubes on his arms to stop his jacket flapping. And he was always thinking – he never seemed to stop. He’d come in every morning full of ideas because his mind was always on the job and he knew what every fitter was doing.

“So he’d take his hat off and then list what everyone should get on with. And when you eventually got it done to his satisfaction, he might say: ‘Well, now I’ve seen it, I don’t think it’s actually right,’ and he’d explain why, while you were tearing your hair out. He’d never bullshit – if it was his idea in the first place, he’d still ditch it.”

Norman’s admiration for Hele verges on the reverential, and listening to how Hele set up the Experimental Department, I begin to understand why. “Unlike a lot of managers, he would always listen to your opinion and always credit you for your ideas. The classic example is Shemozzles.

“We were used to racing on GP carbs, which are brilliant flat-out but not so good in the nadgery stuff. So Jack Shemans, off his own bat, developed the velocity stacks [aka nozzles] which all but converted standard concentric carbs into racing ones. Doug named them ‘Shemozzles’. He would always give you the credit.”

Hele was not a man to throw blame about, either. “One year, at a motorcycle industry event, I took Doug out in a sidecar. We were whizzing along and there was a downhill left-hander, so I went down a gear to allow me to pull it round the corner – and as I changed down, the primary chain broke and we went straight across the road. By a stroke of luck, there was a track and we went down that rather than crashing into a hedge. Doug sent me a letter afterwards – I’ve still got it– explaining that on a sidecar whenever you go round a corner, the loose side of the primary chain would be pulled out of line [by centrifugal force] and get chewed by the sprockets, whereas on a solo it wouldn’t happen. That was typical Doug. He didn’t have a go at me – he was just interested in why it had happened.”

On joining the Experimental Department, Norman had an immediate impact. In the same way he’d analysed the sprint records to find a weak point, he noticed an obvious – to him – flaw in the way components were made.

“At the time, if you wanted, say, a new bracket designed, you’d either have to do it a on fag packet or go through the official system and get a proper draughtsman to do it and have a part number – that used to take a month.” ▶

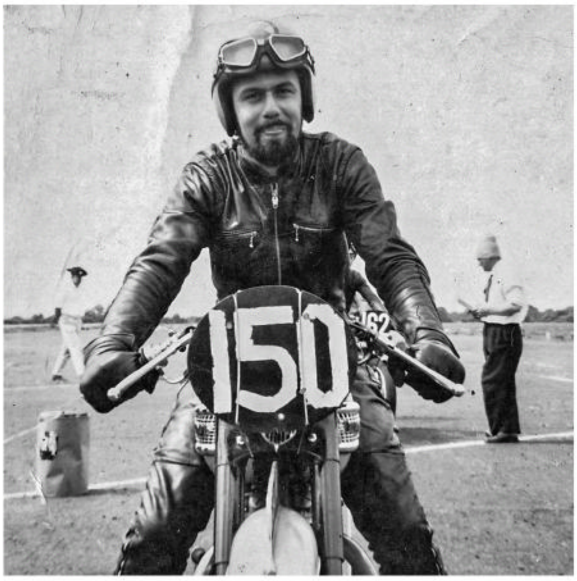
Right: Norman (back row, second from left) and friends at Mallory Park in 1964

Right: One of the advantages of being a Triumph apprentice was that you could occasionally borrow a bike. This time Norman happened to get Steve McQueen’s TR6 Trophy

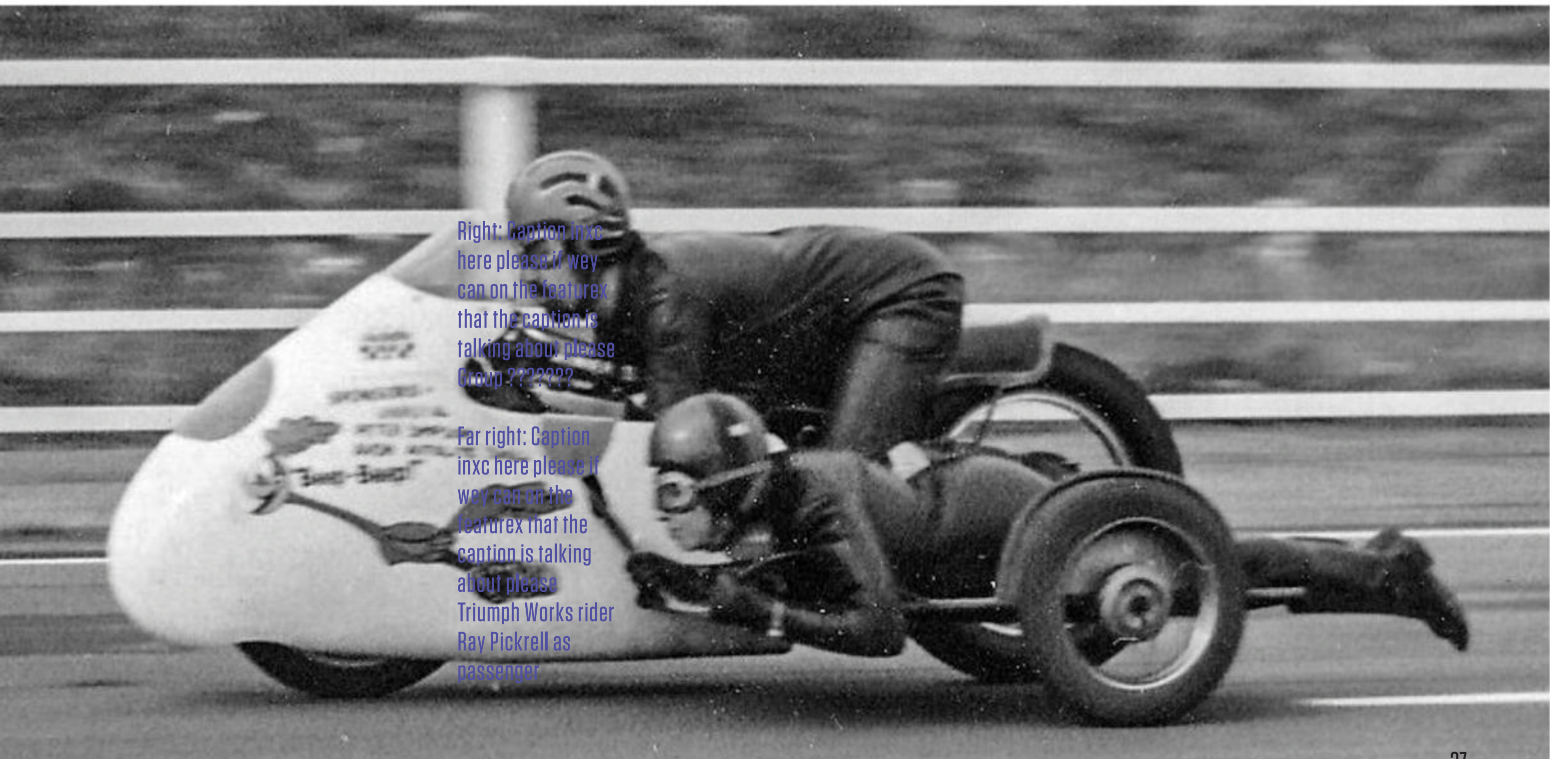
Right: The first sprint on his Triumph Tiger 100 in 1964. At that time Norman rode there and back on the bike, too

Far right: Norman aboard the new Hyde Missile, with Doug Hele behind

Right: Norman pins his Trident-powered Roadrunner outfit in 1968. That’s his wife Diana bravely acting as passenger



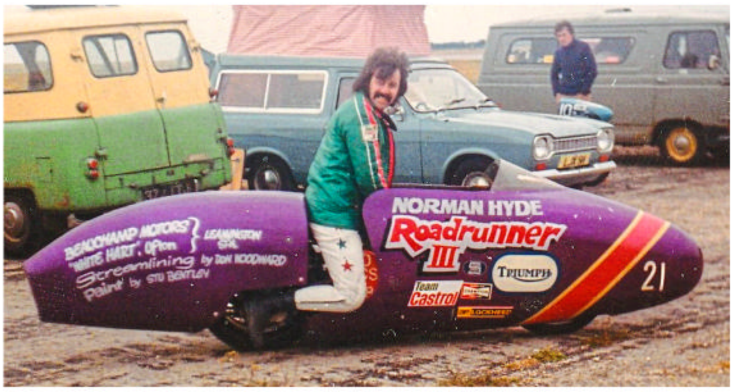
NORMAN
TRIUMPH



Right: Caption inxc here please if wey can on the featurex that the caption is talking about please Group ???????

Far right: Caption inxc here please if wey can on the featurex that the caption is talking about please Triumph Works rider Ray Pickrell as passenger

Top: At Silverstone on Slippery Sam in July 1973. Norman won the Street Bike category despite crashing the bike off the launch on one run
Above, from left: John Parker, Alex George, Paul Smart and Norman
Below: Norman at RAF Fairford in 1972. His average speed of 161.8mph set a world record that remained unbeaten for more than 35 years



‘ON ROADRUNNER III I’D HOLD IT ON FULL LOCK UP TO 80mph AND IT’D LEAP ALL OVER THE PLACE’

To establish a middle ground, Norman started a Development Shop drawing system. “I’ve still got the book with every part created in the Development Department between 1968 and 1975 – over 2000 part numbers. That book explodes plenty of myths about what Triumph was actually developing. For example, I read somewhere that Triumph tested works triples with centre spark plugs, which just isn’t true – and this book proves it.”

Norman then sets down his cutlery, bends to one side and rummages in a satchel by his chair. “Here it is,” he says, brandishing a notebook. He opens it near the front. “So, for example, part 1001 was a one-piece crankshaft with a flywheel for the racers that was never made. But it shows how we were thinking and proves that a lot of stuff written about developments is plain wrong.”

Norman understandably gets irritated by misinformation spread about what Triumph was up to during his years in the Experimental Department, particularly about the Tridents, for which he became responsible. Later on, I mention the Quadrant – the four-cylinder prototype that was rumoured to have been a last-ditch attempt to take on the Japanese fours. “No,” says Norman. “That’s another myth. It’s not what it was about.

“After BSA went bankrupt in 1972, we’d moved to Kitts Green [in east Birmingham], which had been the development centre for the whole BSA group. Dennis Poore was in charge, most of the Triumph dealers had been sacked and Norton dealers were trying to sell Triumphs. They didn’t like the triple because they were used to Commandos – it was so different and the vibrations made it feel rough.

“With a 120° crank, the only vibration should be because of its length – ie not very much – but it was worse than expected. The idea [with the Quadrant] was to build a four-cylinder engine [which should suffer more because of the longer crank] but without vertically-split cases and see if it was the way the triple was structured that was the problem. It was a test. We used to have 30-40 bikes in the experimental department, but as soon as you get a bike on wheels, everyone thinks it’s the next wonderful thing. But it was purely to test vibration – and the four was definitely better.”

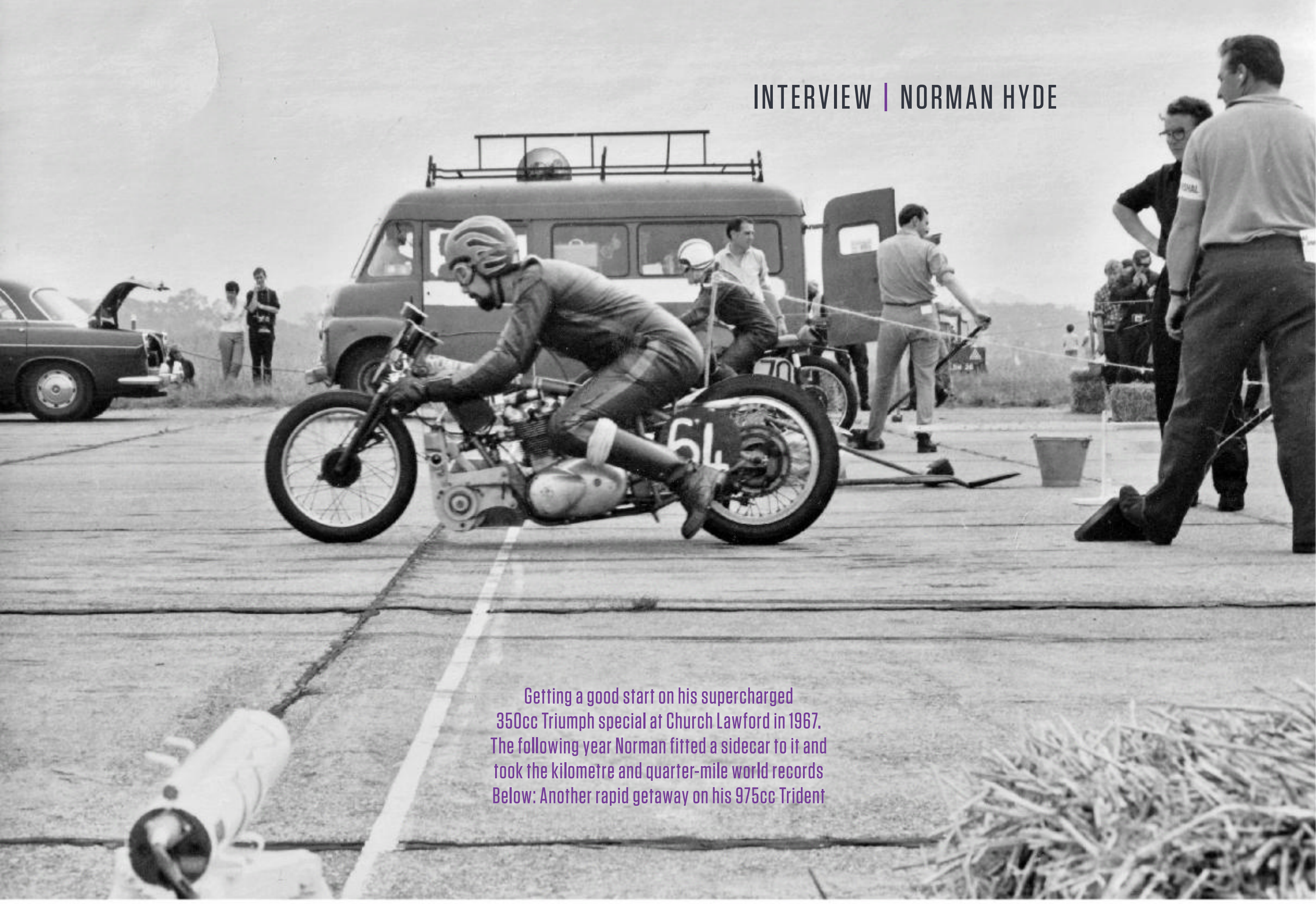
By this stage, Norman had progressed to sprinting fearsomely powerful sidecars. After beating two 750cc world records in 1970 and 1971, he bored the engine out to 831cc and his nitro-methane-fuelled Roadrunner III averaged 161.8mph over the flying kilometre. That beat the record set by George Brown and his Vincent outfit in 1966.

So how edgy were the speed runs? “They had their moments,” says Norman. “I once did over 150mph with someone in the sidecar [for safety reasons, records are set with ballast in place of a human]. It was a lovely guy called Fred Willingham, who’d set records on scooters so hadn’t been more than 100mph. I told him to keep his head down and not look up until we’d stopped. Because the mile was offset for some reason, we ended up on the grass and went between a row of landing lights and stopped just before a hedge. Fred said: ‘I didn’t know there was anything wrong until what I was looking at changed from grey to green’.

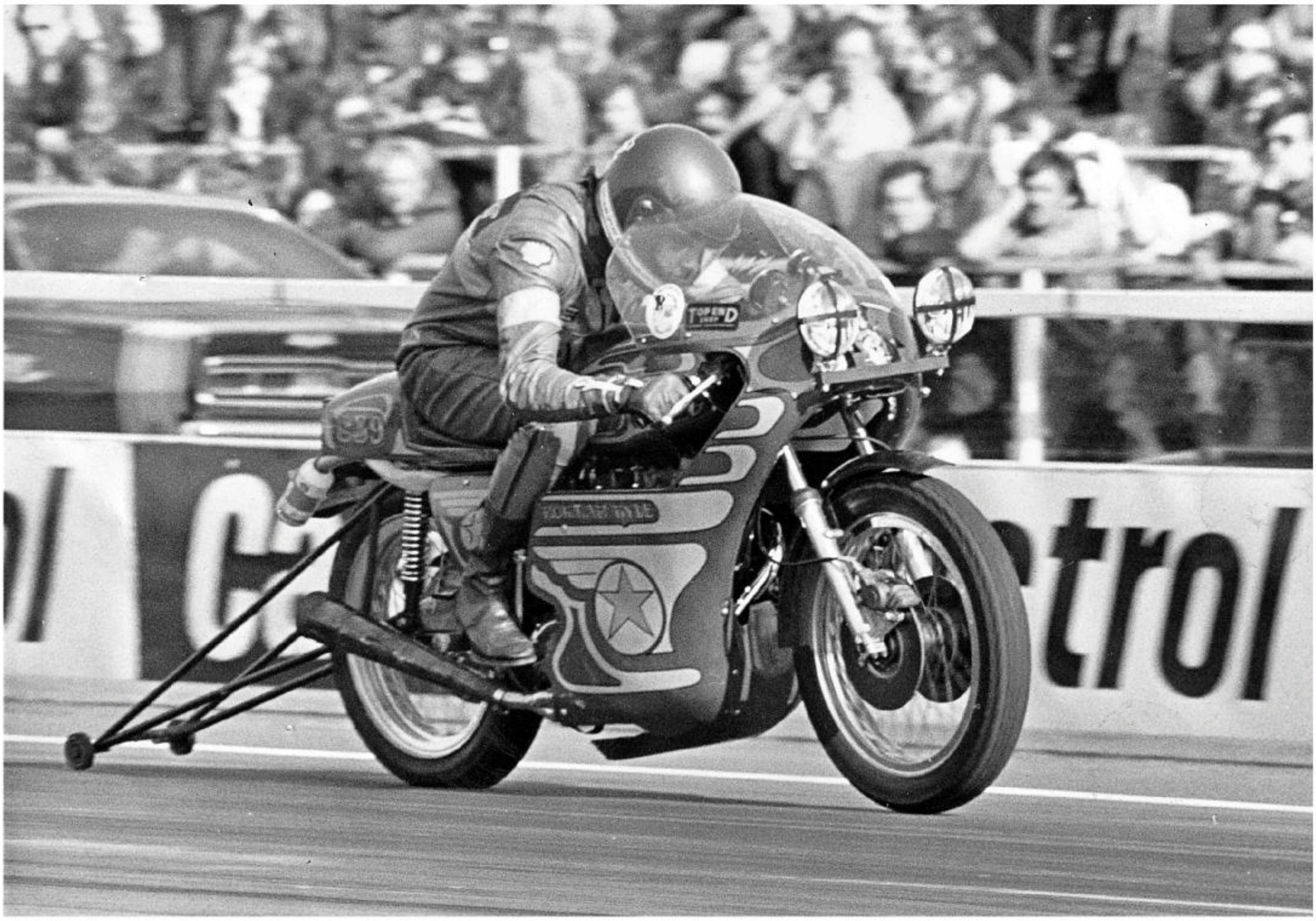
“Also, the runway at RAF Fairford that we used wasn’t as flat as it looked, and I only had a couple of valve springs as suspension at the front so it leapt about all over the place. Then when you got to the end you’d shut off and it went into a tank slapper because you had no steering damper. Though as there was only 15° of steering, it wasn’t too bad.

“Of course, on a standing start, that 15° of steering is a problem because with a sidecar you need more than that to stay in a straight line when accelerating hard. Up to 80mph I’m holding it on full right-hand lock and it’s leaping all over the place. If you steered straight, you’d turn left. At one sprint I shut off and shot off into a ditch.”

At work, meanwhile, Norman – along with everyone else – could see that Triumph was heading into a financial



Getting a good start on his supercharged 350cc Triumph special at Church Lawford in 1967. The following year Norman fitted a sidecar to it and took the kilometre and quarter-mile world records Below: Another rapid getaway on his 975cc Trident



‘I WAS THRILLED WHEN *MCN* MEASURED THE POWER OF THE HYDE HARRIER AT 66% UP ON THE STOCK BIKE’

ditch. Sure enough, after two years at Kitts Green the company collapsed and Norman was handed a £604.11 redundancy cheque for his 11 years of service.

“I got a job with AP Lockheed brakes as a development engineer, but there were so many more layers of management there,” he says. “When I was at Triumph my boss was Doug, who reported to Bert Hopwood [Triumph’s chief engineer, who also sat on the company board] and that was it – it was a flat pyramid. At AP Lockheed, it was more like a Christmas tree – and your status was indicated by things like the colour of your chair.”

Eventually, Norman had had enough and sat down with his wife Diana to work out how they could use his redundancy money to improve matters. “We could buy a car, have a holiday or I could get 10 Trident barrel kits made and try to sell them, not realising at the time that it would cost twice as much as that. It’s these little decisions that can affect your life. Diana and I just cracked on and learned as we went along. I think that our generation was a bit rougher and tougher than youngsters these days – people weren’t snowflakes, we just got on with life.”

And so Norman Hyde Ltd was off and running, selling Trident 850cc big-bore kits, 900cc longer-stroke kits and the two combined to give Tridents 1000cc. By the end of 1976, the company had turned over a respectable £13,000.

Top left: Norman’s business started with Trident 850cc big-bore kits, but soon expanded

Top: The 973cc Hyde Harrier race bike won its inaugural race at Scarborough in 1988 in the hands of TT legend Geoff Johnson

Above: Norman with the Hyde Harrier road bike in 2008. It was built around the engine and running gear from a Hinckley Bonneville

“Generally, companies making things for obsolete vehicles turn out parts that aren’t as good as the original. The basic principle with my company was to carry on making improvements – which I could do. So we put seals on valve guides, made much nicer footrests and so on.

“For the first couple of years I was working out of the garage at home, then I rented a bit of factory space, then I employed two [of the factory’s] top race fitters – Jack Shemans and Arthur Jakeman.” The business blossomed and in 1987 Norman made an entire motorcycle – the Hyde Harrier. Based on a classic Triumph, it had a frame from Harris and was festooned with Hyde’s latest go-faster parts.

“The 2008 Jubilee Harrier gave me the front three pages of *Motorcycle News* and I was thrilled when they measured the power at 66% up on the stock bike [from 50 to 80bhp] with new parts out of my head with no testbed work.”

Though he retired in 2018, Norman isn’t exactly putting his feet up. Having finished his coffee, he has to head off to prepare for one of the many talks he gives to motorcycle clubs about his time at Meriden.

“They were great years,” he says, “and though running the business was stressful, I enjoyed it. I get bored easily and like things to be edgy, whether it’s business or riding bikes. In fact, I’ve just bought a brand new one, and it’s fantastic.” It is, of course, a 660cc Triumph Trident…

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HARLEY-DAVIDSON XLCH SPORSTER

Harleys come loaded with preconceived ideas and prejudices, but what happens when you just treat them like any other bike? Rick approaches his first ride on a '73 Sportster with a teenage dream and open mind...

WORDS: RICK PARKINGTON PHOTOGRAPHY:GARY MARGERUM

AMF Harley-Davidson

I grew up around here. I don't remember the first time I cranked a bike into these bends, but I do know that sometimes – in my imagination at least – I was riding a Harley, more specifically an 'XLCH Sportster'. Now, all these years later, that's just what I'm doing.

It feels strange coming back, riding a real XLCH rather than a combination of imagination and a 50cc moped. I never did end up a Harley owner, but back then the letters 'XLCH' mattered enough for me to scratch them into my school desk. In an old 1960s *Cycle World* annual I'd read a test of a drum-braked 883cc XLCH that seared though the timing lights at 122mph. To an old-bike obsessed teenager, that ranked it alongside a Vincent Black Shadow as an old bike that could still rule the road! Well, I was only 16...

They say you should never meet your heroes, but I'm having a whale of a time. The Sportster certainly lives up to its name – although, to be honest, even if the speedo cable hadn't just broken I doubt I'd ever see 122mph on the clock of this XL1000. By 1972, despite the extra cubes, a more plausible 110mph was claimed – and, given how receptive Harleys can be to tuning, I suspect that 883 in *Cycle World* had been breathed on by the factory.

'THE LETTERS 'XLCH' MATTERED ENOUGH FOR ME TO SCRATCH THEM INTO MY SCHOOL DESK'

But I'm not disappointed. I long since grew out of the idea that top speed was the yardstick for what makes motor cycles fun – it's more about finding roads to make the most of the performance you have. That's why I'm enjoying myself so much. On paper the Harley is a fair bit heavier than anything I own, even though the absence of a starter motor and associated beefcake battery makes this bike 50lb (22kg) lighter than the leccy-start XLH. But it's not a problem; narrow with a tiny tank and low seat, I felt at home as soon as my feet landed on the footrests and it's romping round bends without a care. The Hagon shocks fitted are quite firm, which probably helps, but this isn't what I expected – I had it in mind that Harleys of this era didn't handle. Maybe I got it wrong.

Then again, by the time I started riding, press criticism of Harleys was pretty merciless. The designs were outdated and the knives were out. That in mind, is it any wonder I expected the Sportster to be a clunky old lump. It's nothing of the sort. The clutch is heavy – but no worse than CB400 Fours I've ridden – and the brakes work. Even though the front disc caliper looks like it came off a Lincoln Continental, it still needs a full-hand squeeze – but that's typical of a time when most riders were used to drums. The slim 'Cobra' seat is more comfortable than it looks and matches the handlebar and footrest layout; maybe it would be tiring for long journeys, but for my morning ride it was fine. Probably the biggest surprise is the motor – it's far from the slogger I expected. Like a Vincent, it's not immediately clear from the exhaust note that I'm riding a V-twin. Admittedly, the silencers are more muted than usual, but even so I get the feeling that Harley hadn't completely isolated their patent 'potato-potato' exhaust note when this bike was made.

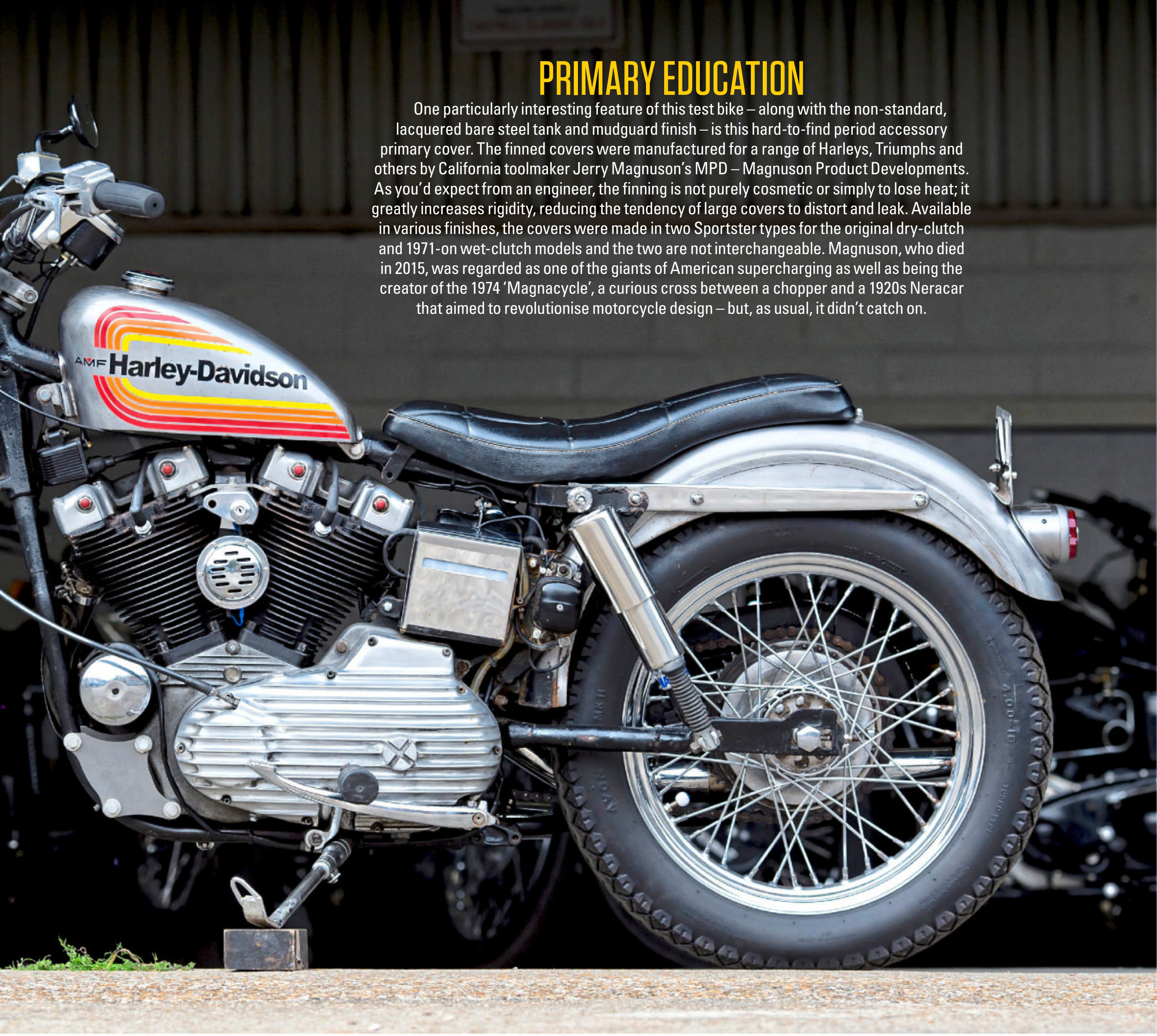
It kickstarts easily, neutral always seems to be where you left it and fuelling is good – possibly aided by the more modern Harley CV carburettor that's replaced the original Bendix. You can feel things moving about in the engine, but the vibration is far from offensive at fun riding speeds and the motor feels responsive and surprisingly revvy without narrowing the power enough to demand another gear

SPEEDMASTER MK II

Harley-Davidson

PRIMARY EDUCATION

One particularly interesting feature of this test bike – along with the non-standard, lacquered bare steel tank and mudguard finish – is this hard-to-find period accessory primary cover. The finned covers were manufactured for a range of Harleys, Triumphs and others by California toolmaker Jerry Magnuson's MPD – Magnuson Product Developments. As you'd expect from an engineer, the finning is not purely cosmetic or simply to lose heat; it greatly increases rigidity, reducing the tendency of large covers to distort and leak. Available in various finishes, the covers were made in two Sportster types for the original dry-clutch and 1971-on wet-clutch models and the two are not interchangeable. Magnuson, who died in 2015, was regarded as one of the giants of American supercharging as well as being the creator of the 1974 'Magnacycle', a curious cross between a chopper and a 1920s Neracar that aimed to revolutionise motorcycle design – but, as usual, it didn't catch on.



Above: Cast away any preconceptions, close your eyes, then open them again and look at this. It's a cool looking bike, right?

Left: Kickstarrting is easy and neutral always selected with an equal lack of difficulty

Right: Fuelling is good on this example. Original Bendix has been replaced by a modern Harley CV carburettor

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Caption in here please if we can on the feature that the caption is talking about

AMF-era Harleys may have been produced during a low point in the Motor Co's history, but bikes from this time have the same low centre of gravity/seat height appeal of all Sportsters

'THIS XL1000 IS NOT A CLUMSY, ANTEDILUVIAN OLD NAIL. IT'S JUST A SIMPLE, ENJOYABLE OLD BIKE THAT YOU COULD REALLY GROW TO LOVE'

in the four-speed box. I like it – actually it's not that different to the Triumph I rode to get here. Not really like a Harley at all. There – I said it. How do I know what Harleys are like if I haven't ridden one before?

Let's face it, it's 'the Harley image'. We *all* know what a Harley-Davidson is like without riding one – and it's very difficult to escape the Harley aura and see it as just another make of motorcycle. I know once-devoted Harley nuts who have fled screaming from the parody lifestyle that they have come to represent. I mean, do people really fit tooled leather Harley loo seats in their bathrooms?

The Sportster was Harley's break from their big-inch cruisers of the 1950s, a first defence against the invasion of light and speedy British parallel twins and singles. The XLCH followed up as the sportsman's Sportster. The 'CH' letters denote 'Competition, High-compression' and supplied for off- road competition, the XLCH started out fitted with a small high-mounted competition tank that became both its most recognisable feature and an all-time chopper icon. The Sporty was a credible performer from its beginnings in 1957 right into the AMF era of the 1970s.

Nowadays the Sportster is seen as Harley's beginner model – a bike for 'the 'ol lady'. Well, lucky her – it's the progeny of the superfast side-valve KR racers, but nobody seems to care about that nowadays. The XLCH falls between stools – its competition glory has been forgotten and it certainly can't disguise itself as 'a Hog'. Like Marilyn Munster, it's the normal kid that comes from a weird family – but where does that leave it today?

Well, when you're primed to love or hate something, it's hard to deal with the fact that there's nothing really outstanding or really wrong with it. This XL1000 is not a clumsy, antediluvian old nail, but nor will it chug-a-lug you into your own American dream. It's just a simple, enjoyable old bike, with no pretensions, that you could really grow to love. It's a 'sports' bike from the days when that was just the alternative to 'touring' – like a Bonneville, XS650 or Commando – and it doesn't deserve to be excluded from their number, because seen in that company it becomes a different proposition.

Priced at £6995, this Sportster makes a good alternative to a Triumph twin. Back in its day, Harleys were expensive new and held their value, but even though the Evo models have massively widened the H-D market, they've left the earlier models in the shade – especially those from the AMF era, which arguably ▶

SPECIFICATION

ENGINE/TRANSMISSION	
Type	Air-cooled four-stroke 45° ohv V-twin
Dimensions	81 x 96.8mm
Capacity	997.5cc
Power	61bhp at 6200
Comp ratio	9:1
Carburation	Harley CV (originally Bendix)
Clutch	Wet multiplate
Gearbox	Four-speed
CHASSIS	
Frame	Tubular duplex cradle
Front suspension	Telescopic fork
Rear suspension	Swingarm with twin Hagon shocks
Brake	Front disc, single piston caliper
Rear	Single leading shoe drum
Wheels	Spoked
Tyres	350 x 19 front, 400 x 18 rear
DIMENSIONS	
Weelbase	58.5in (148.59cm)
Weight	475lb (216kg)
PERFORMANCE	
Top speed	110mph

XLCH TIMELINE

1957 XL Sportster introduced. An 883cc overhead-valve top end was grafted onto the bottom end of the (side-valve) Model K, with which the new bike shared its chassis.

1958 XLH high-compression 55bhp model added along with off-road Competition versions XLC (standard compression) and XLCH (hgh compression). Magneto ignition is fitted to competition models along with a small 2.25-gallon (8.3-litre) tank, replacing the standard four-gallon (15 litre).

1959 42bhp XLC discontinued, XLCH now supplied with equipment for legal road use.

1965 Electrical system uprated to 12v, but remains charged by dynamo and mechanical regulator.

1966 Claimed 15% power increase from fitting camshafts with improved profile. Stronger rivet-fitting (not spring clip) drive chain link now recommended and fitted.

1967 Crankcase casting is changed to include an electric starter on the XLH (touring) model. XLCH remains kickstart only and keeps the original crankcase until 1970.

1969 AMF (American Machine and Foundry) take over, though AMF logo doesn't appear on tanks until 1971.

1972 Larger bore raises engine capacity to 997cc, creating the 61bhp XL1000 models. XLCH remains kickstart only. Racing XR750 with alloy top end introduced.

1973 Introduction of front disc brake and Japanese Kayaba forks.

1975 Gearchange moved to left side, brake pedal to right.

1977 XLCR Café Racer variant introduced.

1979 XLCH final year, 16in rear wheel and disc brake offered while kickstarter becomes option. Prestolite electronic ignition introduced. Custom XLS model added.

1981 Management buyout takes control of the company from AMF ownership.

1985 All-alloy 883 and 1100cc Evo version of the Sportster introduced.

Caption in here please if we can on the feature that the caption is talking about

'THESE MID-'70s MODELS WITH A DISC BRAKE AND 12-VOLT ELECTRICS MAKE PARTICULARLY GOOD BUYS'

represented a lowest point in company pride. These mid-'70s models with a disc brake and 12-volt electrics make particularly good buys, and if you can't cope with just a kickstart, there's always the electric start version – it's no heavier than carrying the average seven-year-old passenger.

Does this Harley live up to my expectations as a kid? Probably not – but then teenage expectations have little foundation in reality. If I had bought one back then, I suspect I would still have it. Approached with an open mind, this is an easy bike to enjoy. I'm guessing this particular bike has been put together for an easy life, as it's pleasingly quiet and easygoing – if there's any Screamin' Eagles round here they're in the corner with a cloth over the cage, but like most old bikes I doubt any two are identical. This is a cool bike and it's fun, but doesn't push that in everybody else's face.

What attracted me to the XLCH in that old magazine was a breath of *On Any Sunday*. You can just about channel that scene through this Sportster enough to keep your mind far away from leather chaps, American eagles, mirror shades and 'If I have to explain you wouldn't understand' patches.

Many motorcyclists wouldn't have a Harley on principle and that's a real shame – is it really the bike you don't like or just the image that surrounds it? Because I think the Sportster should definitely be found Not Guilty.

If you're looking for something a bit different to the usual British twin, it's maybe worth looking at old Harleys from a different point of view.

- This bike for sale at Anthony Godin for £6995

anthonygodin.co.uk

Above: A viable and fun alternative to a Brit twin? Well, Rick certainly thinks so

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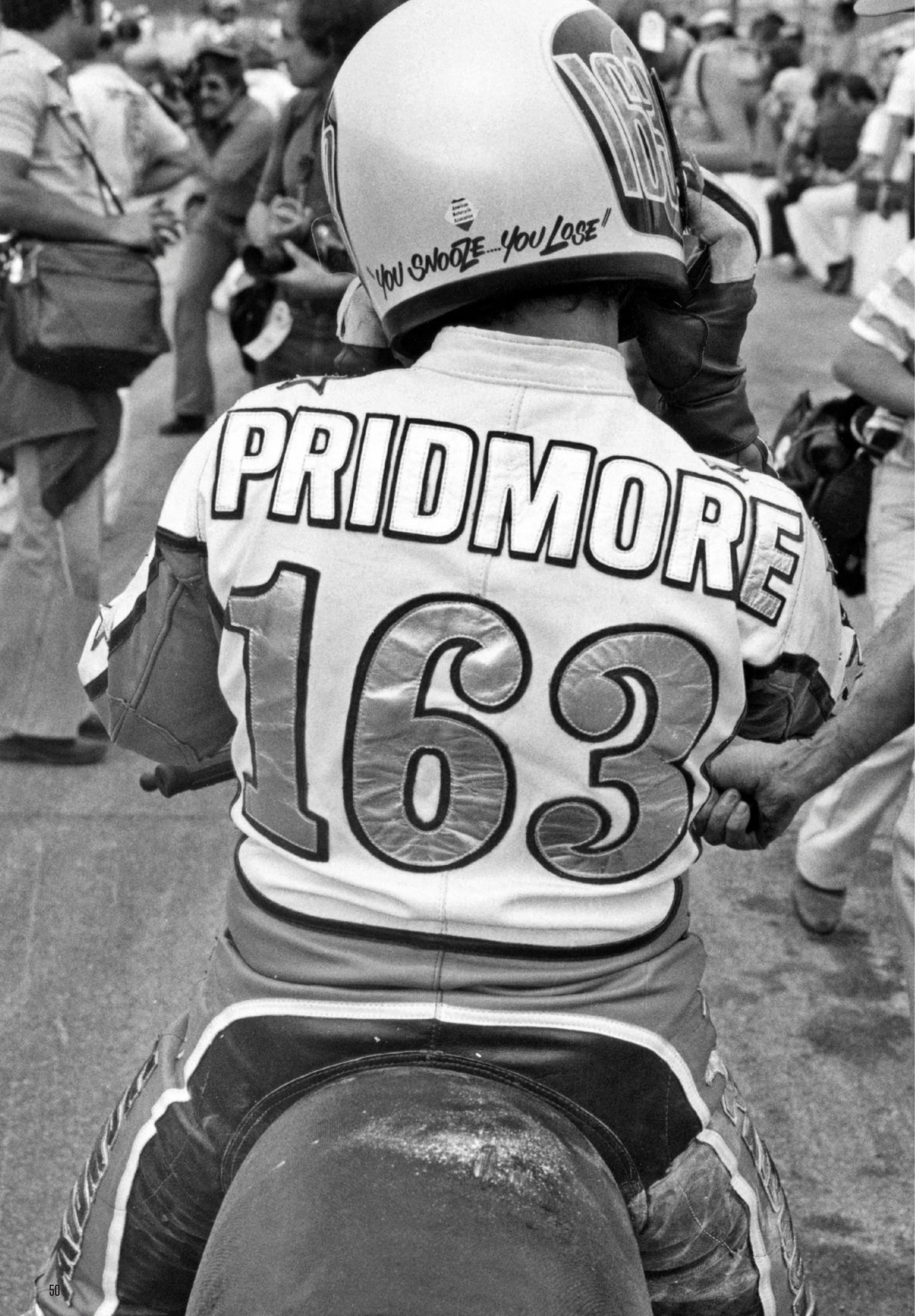
"YOU SNOOZE....YOU LOSE"
PRIDMORE
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WORDS MAT OXLEY
PHOTOGRAPHY: REG PRIDMORE ARCHIVE & BAUER AUTOMOTIVE

THE WORLD'S FIRST SUPERBIKE KING

1970s superbike superstar Reg Pridmore has lived quite a life, from being buried in rubble by the Luftwaffe to winning the world's first three superbike championships...

Right: Triumphs fuelled Pridmore's early biking desires after a workmate talked him into a go on his Tiger 100

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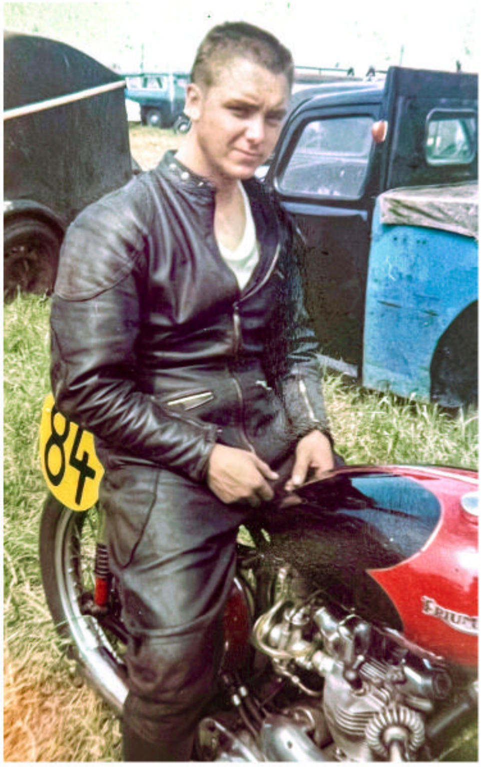
Far right: Reg on his 1976 title-winning BMW R90S



Not many motorcycle racers started their lives the way Reg Pridmore started his. Pridmore was born in East London, six weeks before the outbreak of the Second World War. From September 1940, Germany's Luftwaffe dropped 12,000 tons of bombs on London, killing 30,000 people, many of them in the East End.

In the spring of 1943, the Luftwaffe made one of its last attacks on the city before Allied air superiority forced the Nazis to switch to using V1 flying bombs and V2 rockets. Some of the bombs from that raid fell on Dagenham, where three-year-old Reg lived.

"I remember running to get to the Anderson shelter in the garden with my mother," recalls Pridmore, 83. "We made it downstairs and had a few more steps to get to the garden when it blew pretty bad. We were under the stairs, me and my mum, and it took a couple of hours to dig us out. We rented upstairs, but there was a lady downstairs who died in the blast."

Like many young kids, Pridmore was evacuated from London – or what was left of it – to the Essex countryside, where he grew up. Motorcycles came into his life purely by chance.

"One day, at the factory where I worked, a guy came in on his Tiger 100. We got chatting and he said, 'Try it!' I said, 'No, thanks.' He said, 'Go on, give it a shot – ride down the road and back.' I was so excited I stayed out a lot longer and when I came back he wanted to punch me out!' That's how it all started, around 1954."

Pridmore, like the rest of us, was hooked and it wasn't long before he was a ton-up kid.

"I did all kinds of jobs – worked as a messenger at Lloyds of London, everything, so I could buy a little 350 Triumph Tiger. Within three or four months I'd traded that for a 650 Thunderbird, which I started tearing apart, adding clip-on bars and removing all the bits that I didn't need."

After national service, Pridmore got married, got a job as a welder at the Greeves motorcycle factory in Essex, then at Ford in Dagenham. He started racing, and winning, aboard an AJS 350. But he'd already had enough of grim, grey, post-war Britain.

"The financial side of things was just horrible. We hardly had enough money to exist – we didn't even have furniture in the house. One day I'd just had enough. I'd always wanted to go to California. I had a dream of living in the sunshine, so I contacted the American embassy, went up there and filled out the paperwork."

Early in 1964, Pridmore and his wife loaded their car on to a Transatlantic liner and set sail for their new life.

"When I drove the car off the docks in New York, this cop came over. 'Are you from England? Can you answer a question for me – what's a bloke?'. The Beatles had got in a week before us and his daughter was running around calling everyone a bloke!

"So we drove across the US and ended up in Santa Barbara, north of Los Angeles. When we got there I had my toothbrush, a change of underwear and 238 dollars.

"There was a brand new Honda dealership opening up, so I got a job there and things started to click. A guy had just bought Ginger Molloy's six-speed factory Bultaco 125 and asked me to race it for him. What a beautiful little bike! I won quite a lot of club races and then I bought a year-old Manx and won a club championship on that."

By the early 1970s, Pridmore's ability to get the best out of whatever he rode was getting him noticed.

"The BMW importers [Butler & Smith in New York] gave me a call and said, 'Would you care to race for us?' I went and tested the bike. It was a boxer twin and it was terrible – it had no brakes, it needed suspension and it was critically short on wheelbase, so I asked them to put another inch and a half on the swingarm."

Butler & Smith's secret weapon was engineer Udo Gietl, who had previously worked on the Apollo rocket programme and Polaris submarines. His genius transformed BMW's R69, R75 and R90S from plodding tourers into racetrack weapons, via a multitude of trick factory bits from Munich, Rob North frames and his own considerable brain power.

"When I started winning open races on those things, people started saying: 'What's that guy doing winning on a BMW?' Because nobody was on BMWs! Then I pissed them off some more by putting a pair of saddlebags on the bike.

However, by the early 1970s, four-strokes were on the way out. They had no chance against Yamaha's game-changing two-strokes – the TD, TR and TZ 250s and 350s and the awesome TZ750 – so a West Coast club created a class for street-legal motorcycles. Well, nearly street-legal. They called them California Hot Rods – Norton Commandos, Ducati 900s and Kawasaki Z1s – and they made a mighty noise.

The fans loved them, too. Who wouldn't after watching open-class grids populated entirely by Yamaha twins and fours? So-called production racing spread from Riverside Raceway, on the outskirts of LA, in 1973, to Laguna Seca and finally to Daytona in 1975. The following year the USA's governing body, the AMA, announced a Superbike Production championship, starting at Daytona. History was being made – the world's first superbike series for road-based motorcycles.

Pridmore's BMW team-mate was Steve McLaughlin, who a decade later created the World Superbike championship. They both rode R90S machines and they raced away from the rest of the pack around the Daytona banking.

"Steve was a tough dude to beat, but on the last lap I out-braked him and got out of the last chicane faster, but he picked up my draft and just managed to squeeze around me at the flag. I thought I'd won, I really did, but I'd lost by about four inches."

Journalist Cook Neilson on his 900SS was next, followed by Wes Cooley on his scary-handling Yoshimura Kawasaki Z1000, then Mike Baldwin on his Ray Leoni-tuned Guzzi. Superbikes were anointing a new gang of racing heroes.

"It was a tough group of guys: Cooley, Baldwin, McLaughlin, Neilson and Yvon Duhamel."

McLaughlin had won the opening battle of '76, but Pridmore won the war, taking two victories, a second and a third from the four races to win the crown. His rivals were sometimes faster but they crashed and burned too often. Soon Pridmore became known as 'Mr Consistency.'

"Being 'mechanical' upstairs is very important because depending on how you treat the bike it's either going to help you or dump you on your head. It's all about understanding

‘When I started winning open races on those things, people started saying: “What’s that guy doing winning on a BMW?”’

Kawasaki
WORLD RECO

Right: Reg (right) in 1978 with fellow ex-pat Brit Martin Carney, who was then working for Kawasaki in America

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Opposite, below right: Racecrafters Z1000-mounted Pridmore hounds Steve McLaughlin's Yoshimura Suzuki GS750 at Daytona in 1977

the bike, especially the gearbox. Back then a lot of guys never finished due to transmission failures. You've got to blend in with it, not be too violent."

When Butler & Smith withdrew in early 1977 – they had probably read the writing on the wall – Pridmore went with the flow and got himself a Z1000, backed by Racecrafters, a big LA motorcycle dealership.

"Racecrafters paid us pretty good and the Kawasaki was head and shoulders above the rest, power-wise. But handling-wise it was very poor – it made 143bhp but had a 100bhp chassis. That's why we hired Rob North to work his wonders." North had recently sold up in the UK and set up shop in the US, close to the Mexican border.

"Rob did a lot of work. The front end of the bike was too light and whippy, so he put the forks together properly, strengthened everything and got Ferodo brakes. So we had a bike with good power and brakes, which handled sufficiently well to do the business, and that's what we did."

Pridmore also got a new mechanic. "Pierre des Roches was so on top of everything that was going on. He was in touch with a lot of people and that really helped.

"At that time there was only one reputable guy with a dyno in LA. He took our engine and helped us get some more horsepower, which did more bad things to the handling.

"So Pierre worked hard to get the geometry right. He sawed off the front end and welded it back at a different angle. And he tried to reduce the chassis flex. But when you rode that thing hard it still gave you a bad time. You just had to get deal with it, let it do what it wanted to do!"

And deal with it he did, well enough to retain the title, just a few points ahead of Nielson, riding his beautiful blue 900SS, fitted with trick factory cams. Superbike racing was like the Wild West back then. The early days of any new championship are always the best, as riders and engineers work themselves into a fever, exploring a new world, trying to find an advantage, by fair means or foul.

After each race, teams returned to their workshops, stripped their bikes, cut new cam profiles, ran engines on the dyno, occasionally blew them up and maybe did a bit of cheating. Then they took a hacksaw and welding torch to the chassis, hoping to transform a pig's ear into a silk purse, never quite succeeding. Then they trucked across the States to the next race, unloaded the bikes and found who'd made the biggest step forward since last time. It was a steep learning curve.

By 1978 the US Superbike championship was getting big-money serious. Suzuki replaced its impressive GS750 with its first litre bike, the GS1000, and Honda was soon to unleash its CB900F. BMWs, Guzzis and Ducatis had just about had their day, although Ducati would be back.

Pridmore and des Roches were still together in 1978, when they were backed by Craig Vetter, famous for his fairings and the drop dead gorgeous Triumph X75 Hurricane.

"Craig was interested in what we were doing and a good guy. He'd come up from scratch – in the 1960s he had this idea to make fairings, worked his buns off, made it happen."

Once again Pridmore led the championship on his Z1000, until a big crash at the Suzuka 8 Hours left him with a broken shoulder. "It was so bad I came back home in a body cast."

His closest rival was BMW rider John Long, who won the Loudon round, the last victory by a twin until Ducati's 888 showed up in the 1990s. Long ended the season equal on points with Pridmore but the Eastender took the title thanks to better placings. He was 39 at the time and is still the oldest rider to have worn the crown.

"In '79 I was going for a fourth championship. During practice at Laguna Seca I was doing my thing, passing someone through the fast left after the Corkscrew when all of a sudden I felt a handlebar in my neck. I went down really bad, hit the barrier and broke a load of stuff."

Pridmore knew it was time to quit, so he just missed the superbike big time of the 1980s, when the manufacturers opened their wallets wide and signed Eddie Lawson, Freddie Spencer, Wayne Rainey and Fred Merkel, who all went on to win world championships.

"Time and place – just one of those things," smiles Pridmore. "But, you know what? I did pretty good out of it."

Pridmore focused on running the BMW dealership he had opened some years earlier, but closed the shop in the early 1980s, due to a sales slump, and took up motorcycle training.

"There were a lot of young guys getting killed on their bikes in the Santa Barbara, so I wanted to do something about that," he says.

Pridmore still teaches at his CLASS riding school and has written a book, *Smooth Riding the Pridmore Way*. His son Jason won the 2002 US Formula Extreme title and the 2003 EWC crown, riding with British outfit Phase One.

Bedstead, 1978 Sidecar TT: Vesco TZ750-powered Pridmore with passenger Ken Greene

From superbikes to sidecars

REG PRIDMORE'S decision to tackle the Isle of Man sidecar TT was what's called a weird career trajectory.

His three-wheeler thing started in the States, where a solo crash during 1966 left him badly smashed up.

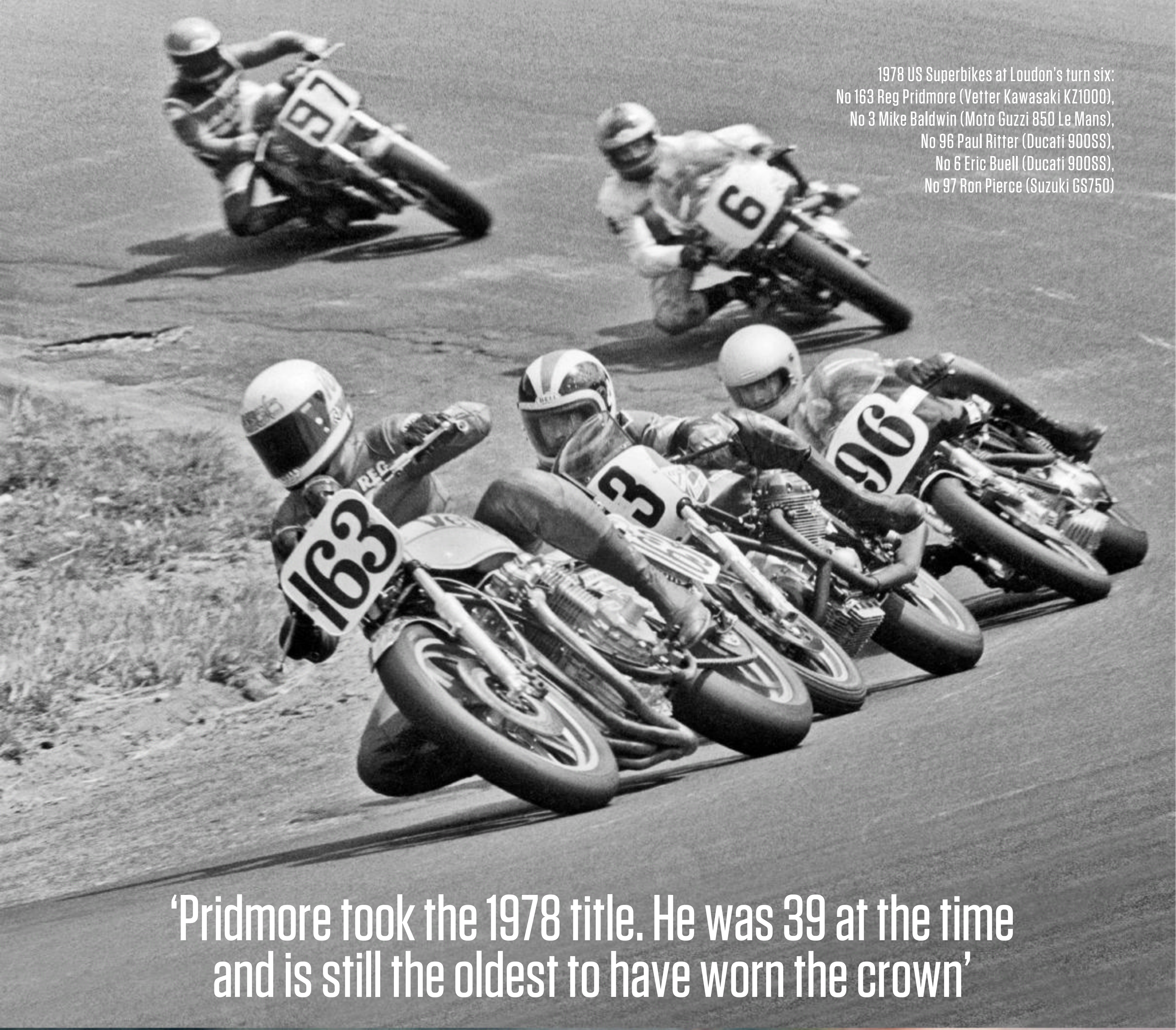
"I had a double compound broken leg and all kinds of things to fix," he says. "I couldn't jump back on a solo, so I got in a sidecar with a Triumph 650 engine. It was a sitter, so I turned it into a kneeler and it worked great. I started beating all the Harley 1200s."

He was soon racing solos again, but the sidecar itch needed scratching, so in 1971 he entered the sidecar TT aboard a Commando-powered RGM.

"If you haven't done the TT you've got to go and say 'Hi!'. We finished 32nd out of 98, which wasn't too bad."

Pridmore returned to the TT in 1978, during a break in the US Superbike schedule, this time racing an outfit powered by a Yamaha TZ750 engine. And not just any TZ750 engine. "I was sponsored by Don Vesco and we had one of the two engines he used to break the 300mph barrier at Bonneville.

"That thing made so much power, but we didn't have a spare set of wheels, so we raced in the wet with slicks. We got some really good sideways stuff!"



1978 US Superbikes at Loudon's turn six:
No 163 Reg Pridmore (Vetter Kawasaki KZ1000),
No 3 Mike Baldwin (Moto Guzzi 850 Le Mans),
No 96 Paul Ritter (Ducati 900SS),
No 6 Eric Buell (Ducati 900SS),
No 97 Ron Pierce (Suzuki GS750)

'Pridmore took the 1978 title. He was 39 at the time and is still the oldest to have worn the crown'

SUPERSPORT
TCX

Soul mate

James Patterson had a thing for Ducati's early '90s Supersports – although the bike he took on as a project took tenacity and perseverance to end up like this. But, when your heartstrings are tugged, what can you do?

WORDS JIM MOORE PHOTOGRAPHY JASON CRITCHELL

HX61
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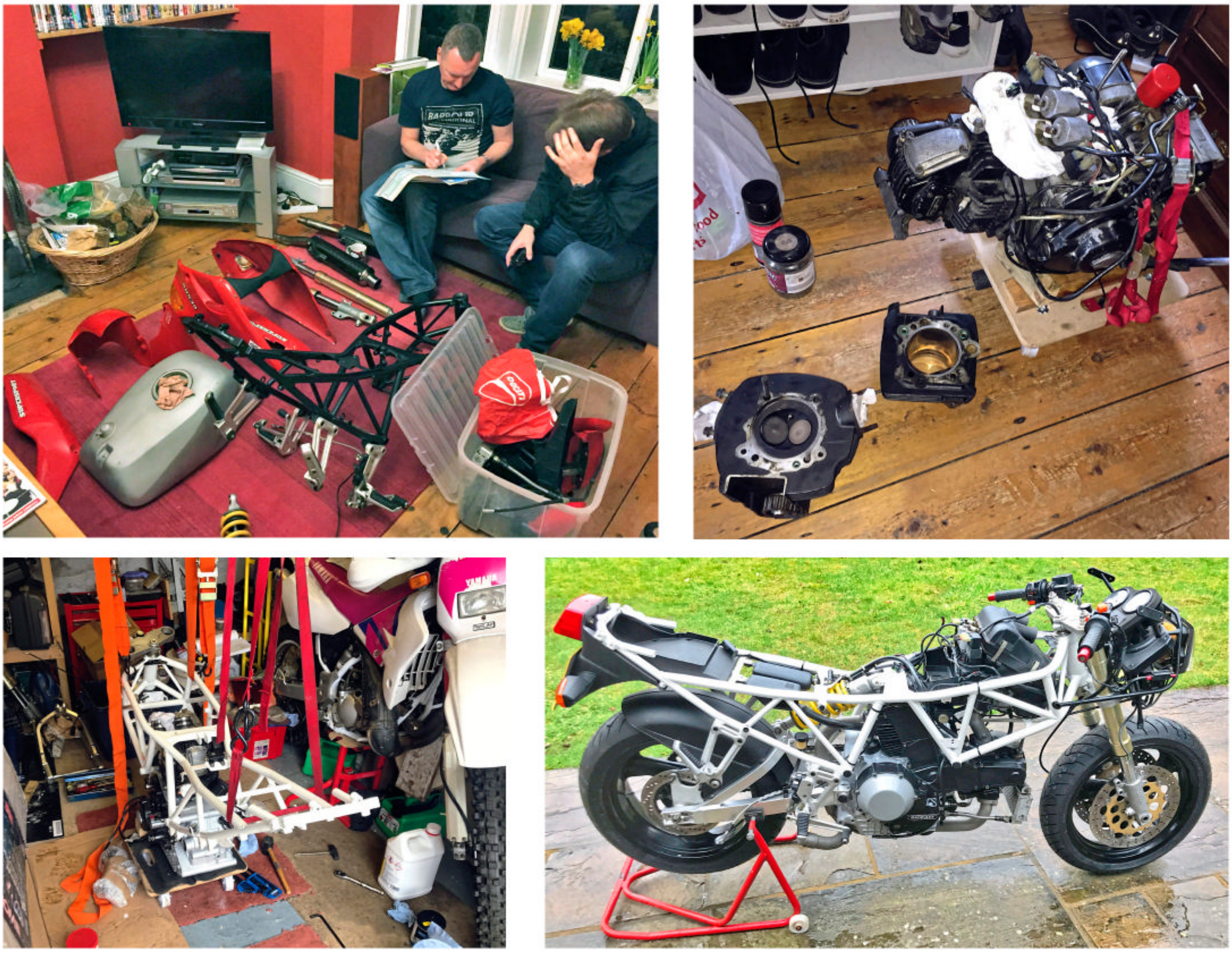
SUPERSPORT
DUCATI
DESMO
Motörhead

James and his finished 900SS. Proof that you don't need a massive garage to get the job done

> 'Its last outing had ended in mechanical disaster when an accidental over-rev caused two of the rear pot's studs to snap'



PHOTOGRAPHY: JAMES PATTERSON

Clockwise from above left: Day one, James signs the log book, with the jigsaw laid out on the living room floor; the engine as it arrived, with snapped rear studs and missing piston; towards the end of project with the engine nestled in the newly powdercoated white chassis, and refurbished shock fitted; lack of space meant the frame had to be suspended on lengths of sturdy timber next to James's trusty DT200

When the planets align, things happen. Call it serendipity. Either way, without it, James Patterson's beautiful Ducati 900SS would still most likely be a pile of parts marinating in a Cumbrian shed.

"Sometimes what you're after is right in front of your nose," says James of his Duke. "In 2016 I was on the hunt for another project. I'd just finished refreshing my Yamaha DT200WR trailie and prior to that I'd restored an early DT125LC. Having briefly toyed with idea of a 250 or 350LC build – quickly dismissed on the grounds of cost – I got chatting with my mate Mark about what I could do. He said, 'What about my 900SS?'"

James had lusted after an early, white-framed Supersport when they first appeared in '91. But what Mark offered was far from the gleaming red thoroughbred that James had desired 25 years prior. Mark's SS hadn't run in six years – its last outing ended in mechanical disaster when an accidental over-rev caused two of the rear pot's studs to snap.

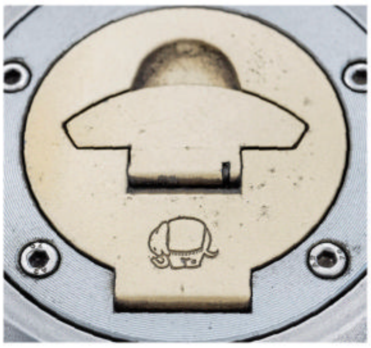
"The story gets worse," explains James, as he relays Mark's tale of woe. "He sent the engine to a local Ducati 'service centre' who made a half-hearted attempt at removing the snapped studs. One was an easy retrieval – it'd broken half way up. The other had sheared inside the case; the mechanic charged with the job just gave up, apparently, leaving the garage shortly after, along with the piston that he'd removed to gain access to the stud. Neither were seen again."

Mark had made progress in other areas, though. He'd had the frame powdercoated, in black rather than white, the forks rebuilt, carbs professionally cleaned, and the fuel tank and exhaust system vapour-blasted. Then, largely due to the engine debacle, progress stalled, and the SS followed Mark, in bits, through six house moves. Such was Mark's love/hate relationship with the 900, he named her 'Lucrezia', after the notoriously cantankerous 16th century Italian noblewoman Lucrezia Borgia…

"Even though Mark was a mate, and I was familiar with Ducatis – I'd had a Monster 600 and a Multistrada 1000DS – taking on the 900 project was still a real punt," remembers James. "I had no idea if the engine was even repairable, but after we agreed on £950 – haggled down from £1500 on the basis that a new piston would cost £300 and a replacement for the seized OE shock would be around £250 – I figured that, if the engine was shot, I could at least still sell it for parts and recoup my money. That was December 2016. Although originally from Cumbria I'm now based in Derbyshire, so Mark wasn't able to bring the Duke down from Carlisle until the following February."

When he did, James's neighbours may well have wondered what on Earth was going on. Mark didn't reach Derbyshire until the early hours, by which point the sight of two men lifting large, heavy, sheet-covered objects from the back ▶

> 'I found a guy online who'd rebuilt an SS and created a record of every nut, bolt and washer – length, pitch, thread type, the lot...'



SPECIFICATION - 1992 DUCATI 900SS

ENGINE/TRANSMISSION	
Type	Air/oil-cooled, DOHC, 2 valve-per-cylinder, 90° L-twin
Capacity	904cc
Output (claimed)	84bhp@7000rpm
Torque (claimed)	62lb.ft@6400rpm
Bore x stroke	92 x 68mm
Compression ratio	9.2:1
Carburation	2 x Mikuni BDST38
Ignition	Electronic
Primary/final drive	Gear/chain
Clutch	Dry, multiplate
Gearbox	Six-speed
CHASSIS	
Frame	Tubular steel trellis
Front suspension	41mm Showa upside-down forks, adjustable preload and rebound damping
Rear suspension	Showa monoshock, adjustable preload and rebound damping
Front brakes	2 x 320mm discs, four-piston Brembo calipers
Rear brake	245mm disc, twin-piston Brembo caliper
Wheels	Cast aluminium, three-spoke
Tyres, F/R	120/70 ZR17 / 170/60 ZR17
DIMENSIONS	
Wheelbase	1410mm (55.5in)
Seat height	780mm (30.7in)
Fuel capacity	17.5 litres (3.8 gals)
Dry weight	183kg (424lb)
PERFORMANCE	
Top speed	136mph

of a car looked highly suspicious to say the least...

Fortunately no one called the local constabulary and James was able to crack straight into the project, the first job of which was to remove the remaining snapped cylinder stud. It's a known weakness of these air/oil-cooled Desmo lumps. Ducati dropped the ball at the design stage, ordering stainless studs instead of mild steel – the former heat up and expand at a slower rate than the aluminium cylinders, often snapping under the strain as the metals warm through at differing rates.

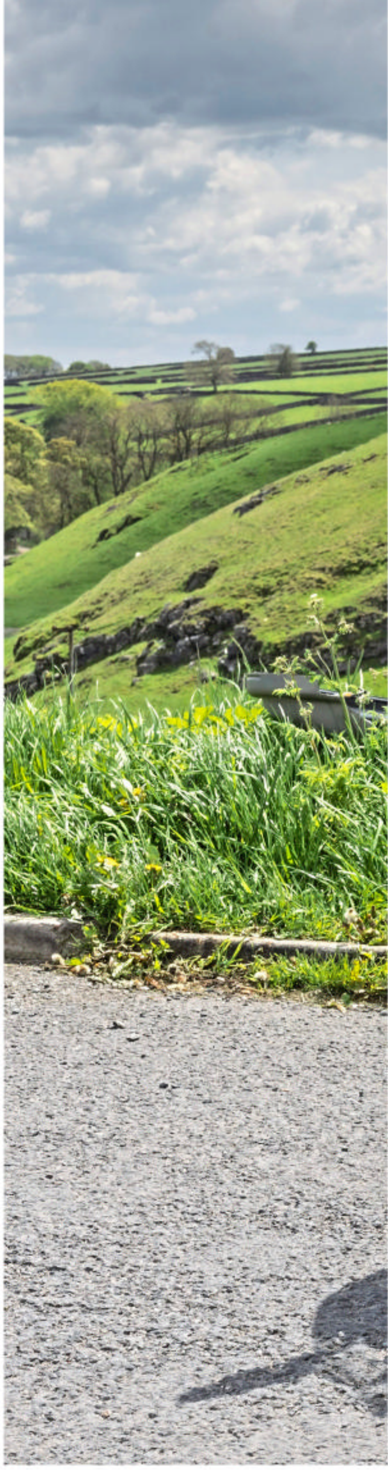
"A previous owner must have encountered the same issue on the horizontal cylinder," says James. "All that pot's studs had been replaced – you can tell as they're stamped 'O' on the end. Retrieving the remaining stud from the rear cylinder was a specialist job, so I took the motor to SEP in Kegworth.

"I ordered heavy-duty APE studs from CA Cycleworks – £80 for eight – but when I got the motor back, SEP had helicoiled the stud recess slightly on the piss. Luckily, an engine builder I know said it wouldn't be an issue because there's plenty of give in the replacement studs."

New studs in place, James then turned his attention to the missing piston. Enquiries revealed that the cost of a single OE replacement was roughly the same as a pair of high-comp JE pistons, so the forged aftermarket parts got the nod, bringing with them a subtle performance boost through 11.5:1 compression (stock is 9.2:1). Fresh valve guides replaced the worn originals, but other than a meticulous engine rebuild the motor was good to go.

"The most tedious part of the build was repainting the engine. Some people favour stripping the original paint and then coating the bare metal with ACF50, but that's not the look I wanted. I spent hours with a wire brush on a drill getting into all the nooks and crannies in the castings and cooling fins. I managed to get hold of some old-school industrial-strength paint stripper as well – Nitromors just isn't up to the job any more.

"Paint results were, well... a mixed bag. After a couple of coats of etch primer, I initially went with Hycote VHT Silver-



Right: After a stalled effort to paint it gunmetal grey, the engine was eventually brought up to a level James is happy with by using a can of Simoniz engine enamel originally earmarked for his DT

Far right: Standard shock was given a refurb by the good folk of MCT, but James is eyeing an aftermarket one

Grey which, I'd hoped, would come out as a tasteful gunmetal grey. Disappointingly it barely looked any different to the etch primer, so instead I used a can of Simoniz engine enamel that I'd intended for the DT200WR. It's not quite the finish I had in mind, but I can live with it."

Although the engine was back in one piece, James still didn't know if it would work as required. He was therefore reluctant to commit too much cash to the project, just in case it was throwing good money after bad.

"Mark had already had the tank blasted, so that had to be resprayed. I'd cleaned up the panels and they came up OK – a bit of patina here and there, but nothing I couldn't live with. A mate of mine recommended FB Imagery in Sutton in Ashfield to spray the tank, but I hadn't been there long before Steve, the gaffer, convinced me that it'd be a mistake to do just the tank as it'd stick out like a sore thumb against the rest of the plastics. So, I bit the bullet and took his advice. Despite being the single biggest expense of the rebuild – £750 as opposed to just £250 for the tank – I don't regret it. They did an excellent job, as did The Image Works with the graphics; £30 the lot."

James recouped some of that expenditure through a

result with the rear shock. Mark had assumed it was seized – it was certainly a job to get it to move, even with the spring removed. Having sent it to suspension gurus MCT in Suffolk, James was relieved to discover that "they're all like that, sir." Total bill £120, rather than £250-plus for a replacement.

"It's a harsh ride on anything other than smooth roads," says James. "But MCT have certainly improved it. I can live with it for now, but if I change anything in the future, a more forgiving, better quality shock is definitely top of the list."

James's workshop can't have been the easiest place to rebuild a near litre-sized Italian twin. I say 'workshop' because it's certainly no garage, rather a modestly proportioned add-on to the back of the house. A bike bench wouldn't fit so instead James thought laterally and realised the space's potential by hanging the bike from joists, held in place on one side by a sturdy wall-top-cum-lintel and on the other by steel brackets screwed into the stone. Simple, yet effective.

"I was able to suspend the frame on a couple of lengths of 3 x 2, then wheel the engine in from behind on a dolly that I bought from Aldi for a tenner," he explains.

The project's other potential headache was the huge box in which everything other than the bodywork, wheels and suspension had been discarded. Nothing was labelled or photographed during the dismantling stage, leaving James with a giant mechanical jigsaw and no instructions.

"Yes, that was a major concern," he says, grimacing at the memory. "Luckily, I still had a Haynes manual from my Monster days and Mark gave me a factory manual, too. Better still, I found a guy online who'd rebuilt an SS and, during the process, had created a record of every single nut, bolt and washer and where they fit – length, pitch, thread type, the lot, so that made the build so much easier."

The result has certainly been worth the effort. These early '90s Supersport models are right up there with Ducati's finest work, their attraction being simple beauty and an uncluttered purity of design. Looking over James's bike I can't help but notice that the frame's not as Mark had it finished.

"Good spot. He had it painted black but, for me, the correct white finish sets the whole thing off. I made the mistake of sending it to a general powdercoater though, rather than a bike specialist. Their masking off wasn't that thorough, so when I got it back, I spent ages retapping threads, cleaning earthing points and generally tidying it up. They've covered the frame number, too, which is slightly annoying, but it's a lesson learned."

Restoring a 30-year-old Ducati is rarely going to be plain sailing, especially one nicknamed 'Lucrezia', and sure enough she revealed her awkward side when James came to firing up the motor for the first time…

"I'd got it all back together, turned her over a few times minus the plugs to circulate the oil, then splashed in a bit of super unleaded, gave everything the once over, primed the fuel pump, pressed the starter and… fuel pissed out everywhere from the Y-piece in the fuel line.

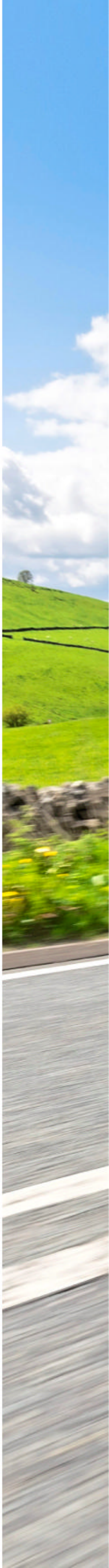
"I figured it had perished and cracked – a common issue – so I started hunting for a replacement, but they're really hard to find. That forced me to go back for a closer inspection. A leak test revealed that the Y-piece was actually OK, so I reasoned that the fuel line clamps could be the issue. A new set of clamps confirmed my suspicion. Once they were replaced it fired up, much to my relief because the gamble of buying the thing in the first place had paid off."

The joy of any project is in the riding, and James's SS rolls like a good 'un, especially on the wonderfully smooth, snake-like Derbyshire Peaks passes a mile or two from his doorstep. Riding a Ducati of this vintage isn't so much an experience of man and machine, more an interaction with a living, breathing creation. Its air/oil-cooled Desmo lump has soul, character and depth to its delivery, underpinned by a thumping rhythm section of torque that's ever eager to punch the thing on to the next straight. Hearing its booming bassline bounce off drystone walls and rocky roadside outcrops seals the deal.

Harsh rear shock aside, the handling's accurate, precise, and responsive to the lightest of input. And James's decision to equip the Brembo four-pots with braided lines pays dividends every time I brush the front lever in anticipation of the next turn; the stopping power and feel are immense.

With character comes quirks. On this Duke the heavy, sometimes grabby dry clutch – which rattles like a spin drier full of old bolts when you pull the lever in – is a pain (literally) to operate through town. The motor struggles to hold idle until thoroughly warmed through, too ("she's still running a touch rich"). And James wants to reposition the oil-cooler to just below the headlamp – ironically where it was intended to be until Ducati moved it to just in front of the engine. But that can wait because for now he's enjoying riding the thing too much to have it off the road again.

"In truth, for what I've spent, I could have simply bought a tidy 900SS," says James. "But what would be the fun in that? And besides, I think this was meant to be…"



JAMES'S ESSENTIAL TOOLS

Aldi air compressor

"I've had this for about seven years. I paid £100 for it, which was half the price of a Clarke equivalent, and it's been great. As well as the obvious setting of tyre pressures, I use it mainly for cleaning and blowing water out of my Multistrada's swingarm drain bolt."

T-Handle Allen keys

"I can't remember what make they are – the logo's worn off from use – but I use them all the time. They're just so handy and easy to use, especially compared to conventional Allen keys. I've had them about eight years, and I think I paid £3 each for them."

Halford's socket set

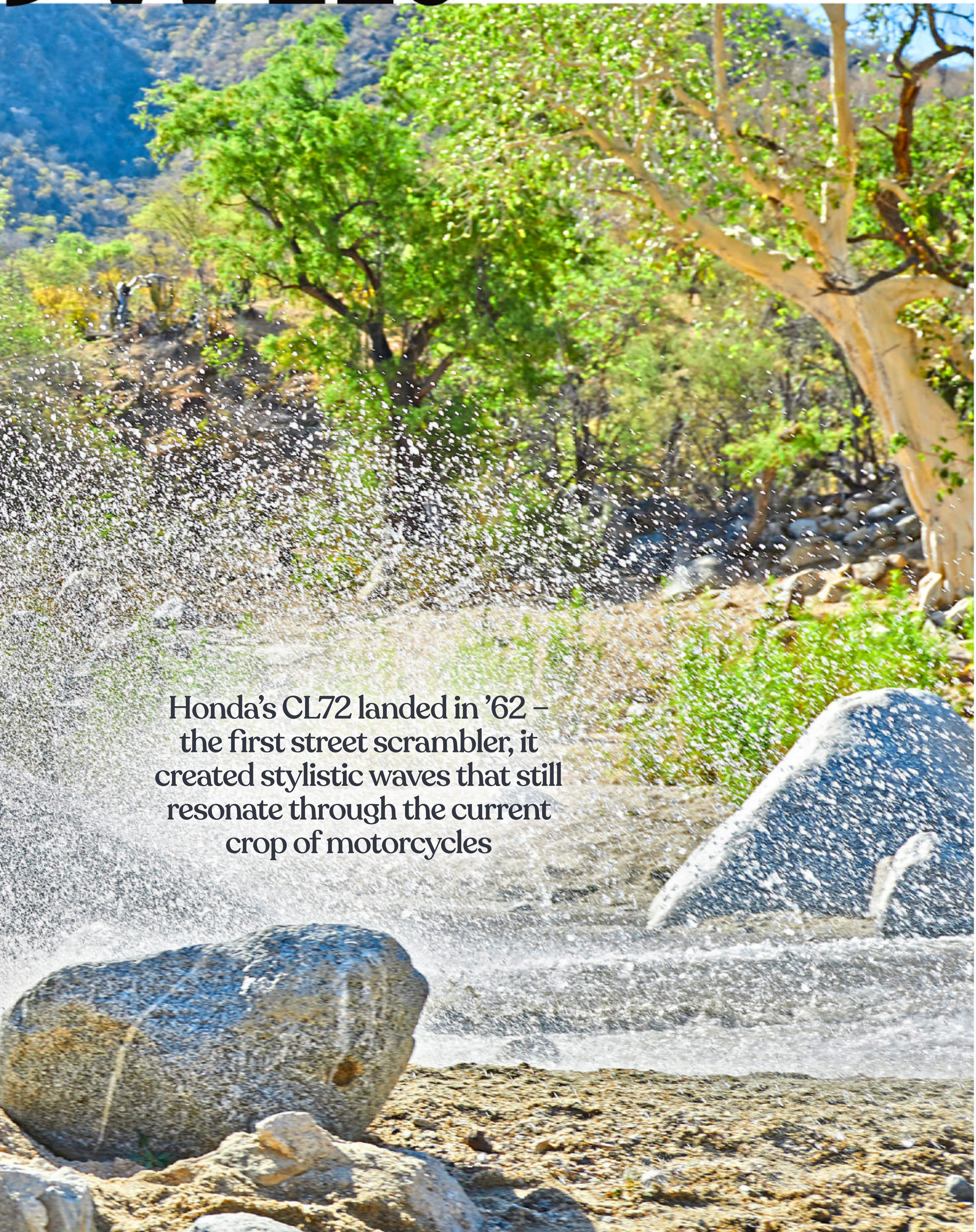
"It should have been £200, but I got it on offer at half price. Really impressed by the quality and the range of tools within. I use the ratchet spanners a lot. But I do wish it had a 6mm spanner and screwdrivers. I've bought JIS (Japanese Industry Standard) screwdrivers for working on my DT."

'The Desmo lump has soul, character and depth to its delivery. And hearing its booming bassline bounce off drystone walls and rocky roadside outcrops seals the deal'

Splashd

own!

WORDS: PAUL D'ORLÉANS
PHOTOGRAPHY: DAVID MARTINEZ & THE VINTAGENT ARCHIVE



Honda's CL72 landed in '62 – the first street scrambler, it created stylistic waves that still resonate through the current crop of motorcycles

Picture a modern day scrambler. You're thinking of a road bike with off-road styling cues, right? But it wasn't always that way. Before 1962, a 'scrambler' was an off-road racing motorcycle, for hare and hound scrambles, or, as the nomenclature evolved in the 1950s, motocross. It seems Velocette was the first to offer an actual Scrambler model, in 1954, and other factories followed. In 1957 both BSA, with its A10 Spitfire Scrambler, and Harley-Davidson, with its one-year XLH and XLCH Scramblers, listed motocrossers without lights in their brochures.

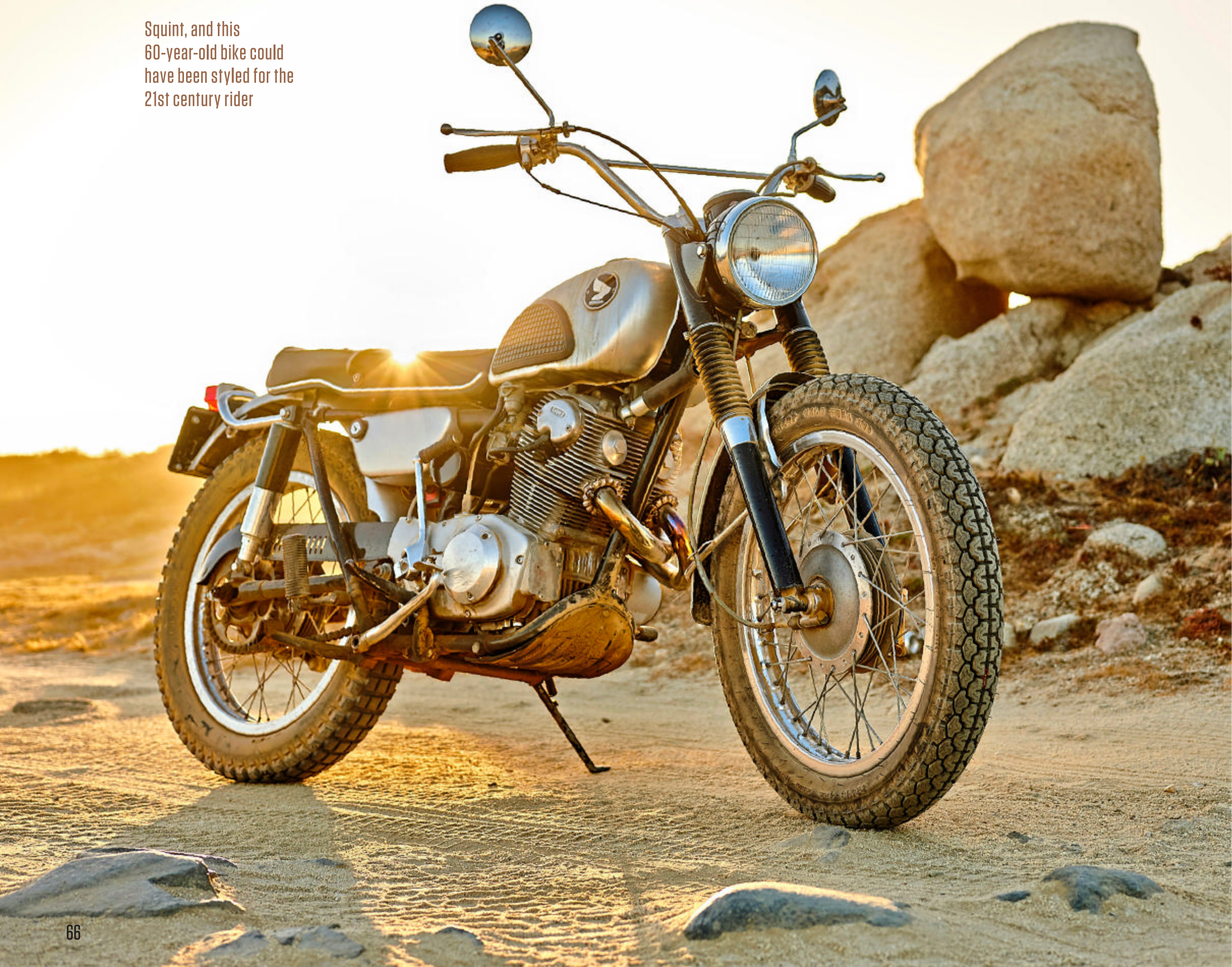
But everything changed for the industry in 1962, when both Ducati and Honda offered iconic models that continue to impact the course of the motorcycle industry. Ducati's first Scrambler was a classic single-cylinder 250cc ohc roadster (with lights), intended for 'street riding, road racing, short-track racing and scrambles'. Period press tests noted the Ducati was superb on the road, but equally emphasised it was not a proper motocrosser: 'Its deficiencies in rough terrain simply reflect the fact that no bike will do everything equally well,' said *Cycle World*.

SOME PEOPLE HAVE ALL THE FUN
You meet the nicest people on a Honda
HONDA

And that has been the inherent flaw in every scrambler since, and a line in the sand. Scramblers were no longer competition-only, but catered to a different audience, in much the same way factory-made café racers and production racers (Velocette Thruxton, BSA Gold Star et al) were seldom used on the race track, but became totems of identity and desire – or desire for identity.

The 1962 Honda CL72 Scrambler was a work of marketing genius. Soichiro Honda had clocked the primal sexiness of off-road racers, so created a wholly new model, built around the CB72 motor, that captured the MX spirit. And it was a proper job, with a full cradle frame, smaller brakes, tweaks to the 247cc twin-cylinder ohc motor (even a 360° crank option), a smaller fuel tank (in aluminum at first), shorter seat, etc. Gone was the push button starter, because the groovy trestle frame suspending the motor of the CB series now had a front downtube. The result was a handsome machine, with all the right cues: twin high-level exhaust pipes, a small tank, 19in flanged wheel rims (but steel), MX handlebars...

Honda's target was the USA, so they engaged Dave Ekins (Bud's brother) to campaign a prototype CL72 in SoCal enduros in 1961. For the new model launch in December '62, Bud Ekins and the team at Honda USA cooked up a huge publicity stunt with the first-ever timed run down the length of the Baja Peninsula, from Tijuana



Squint, and this 60-year-old bike could have been styled for the 21st century rider

Above: Dave Ekins en route to La Paz along the Baja Peninsula in the epic Honda CL72 publicity trek of 1962
Below: Ekins was joined by Bill Robinson Jr (left), who trailed in 30 minutes behind thanks to a holed piston, ripped off mudguard and lost air filter

NORT OTEL
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NSURANCE
MEXICO

Above: The author has learned that cinder tracks – not sand dunes – are the Honda CL72's preferred terrain

to La Paz – 963 miles of nothing but sand and rocks and cactus.

Steve McQueen's pal Bud was contracted to Triumph, so brother Dave became rider No1, with Bill Robinson Jr as rider No2. The Baja trip was complicated, with few towns en route, so no petrol or food could be found, barring from the occasional rancho with a landing strip. That meant sandwiches and fuel were dropped from two small planes following ahead.

Dave and Bill left Tijuana at midnight and rode straight through the night in the thundering desert darkness, with only their pathetic headlamps guiding the way. Within three hours they'd both been clotheslined by barbed wire across the 'road', and Bill's bike had its rear mudguard torn off, which had unforeseen consequences. They got lost many times – and fell off many times.

Dave Ekins warbled into La Paz 39 hours and 56 minutes later, while Bill Robinson Jr smoked in half an hour later, as that lost rear mudguard had taken an air filter with it. He'd also holed a piston 100 miles north of La Paz, riding flat out on the blessedly paved road into town.

With impressive coverage in *Cycle World* spinning a tale of monumental difficulty overcome, illustrated with two handsome riders, a Cessna, and the cool new Scramblers, it was a PR coup on a par with the old Maudes Trophy stunts (which Honda also took in '62, when three Honda step-thrus covered more than 15,800 miles at Goodwood over a week of 24-hour riding). That and the 125 and 250 GP world championships made 1962 a very good year. With such a launch, how could the CL72 (and CL77 in '64) fail to sell 89,000 units over five years?

Despite the noble efforts of Ekins and Co, Honda's very first nominally off-road machine was hardly a motocrosser. True, the CL72 was reliable and tough as nails – a characteristic of every bike Honda made in the era. But the price of such bombproofing was weight – the CL motor is a lump, the frame is built for abuse, and those flanged steel rims are just too sensible.

It's a compact but stout little machine, with everything packed into a short wheelbase. Weight figures for the CL series vary; early press accounts claim 315lb/142kg (the first models that had aluminum everything – tanks, sidecovers, mudguards, etc) but later say 352lb/160kg. After a few years of riding my own 1964 CL72 in Baja, I suspect the latter figure is correct, with the bulk of its mass seemingly an inch behind the front wheel.

Forget easy wheelies or finessing the front end through deep sand – it's a plough. And while 24bhp @ 10,000rpm was potent in the day, I've had to push my Scrambler through deep, soft riverbeds with the bike in gear, as floating across the sand with the front wheel aloft requires a very different machine.

No bike does everything well, so I forgive the CL Scrambler its lack of bona fide dirt ability. And Honda's bold usurpation of the scrambler name, in axis with Ducati's Scrambler the same year, changed motorcycle design and marketing. After young customisers revived the off-road style thing in the mid-2000s, the motorcycle industry quickly mobilised to offer new scrambler models, which have proved as popular in the age of social media as they were in the 1960s. Triumph planted its scrambler flag in 2006, Ducati followed in 2014, and today factories large and small offer scramblers in a bewildering variety of specifications. The legacy of the Honda CL72 lives on, seemingly with no sign of abating – and the best news is they're not especially expensive now, despite their iconic status.

WANT ONE?

Although made in huge numbers, the CL72 and its 305cc sister the CL77 were never sold in the UK when new. But the influx of used imports from America means both models do now come up for sale here. Dealers ask up to £6000 for tidy original bikes or good restos, but you can buy privately for less. Alternatively, check out American auctions and get one shipped back. Six CL77s were sold at the recent Mecum Las Vegas auction for between $4950-9000.

mecum.com

HONDA CL72 (CL77) 1962-67

ENGINE/TRANSMISSION	
Type	Air-cooled sohc parallel twin
Dimensions	54 x 54mm (60 x 54mm)
Capacity	247cc (305cc)
Power	24bhp (28bhp)
Compression ratio	8.5:1
Carburation	2 x 22mm (2 x 26mm Keihin)
Clutch	Multiplate
Gearbox	Four-speed
CHASSIS	
Frame	Tubular cradle single downtube
Front suspension	Telescopic fork
Rear suspension	Twin shock absorber swingarm
Brakes	2 x sls drums (late 77s have tls brakes)
Wheels	Spoked, steel rims (alloy on early models)
Tyres	3.00 x 19f, 3.50 x 19r
DIMENSIONS	
Wheelbase	52.4in/1331mm
Weight	352lb/160kg
PERFORMANCE	
Top speed	70mph (80mph)

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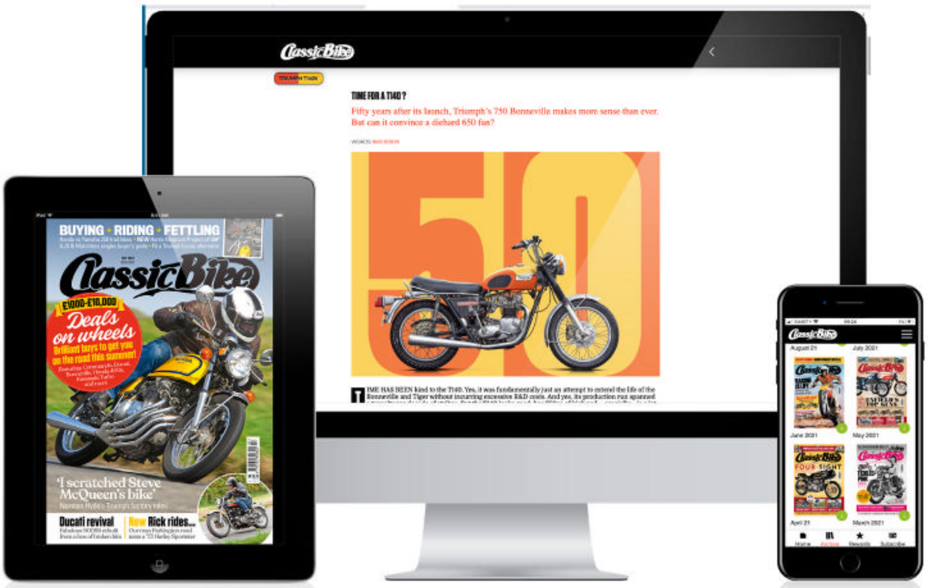
Hugo Wilson, Editor



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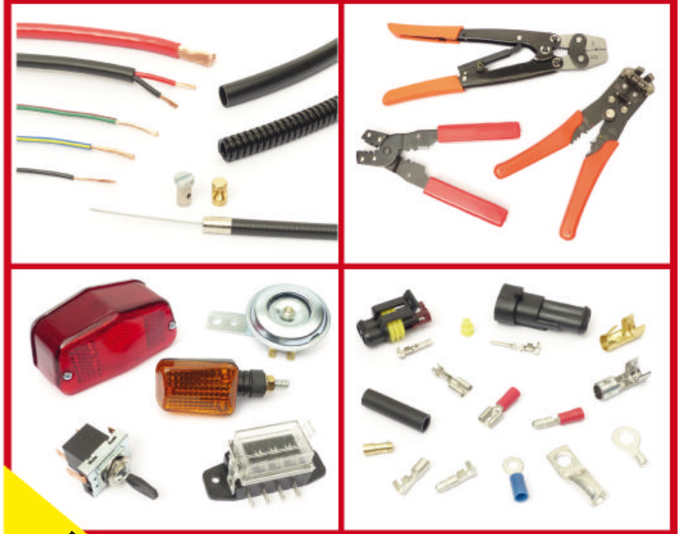

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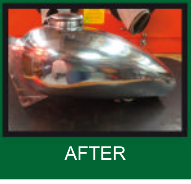

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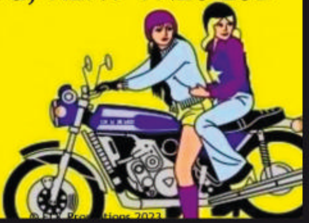

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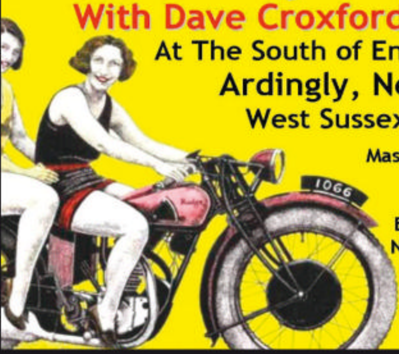

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BUYING
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Welcome to the sharp end of *Classic Bike*. Your hosts are spannering supremos Rick Parkington and Alan Seeley, along with market guru Gez Kane

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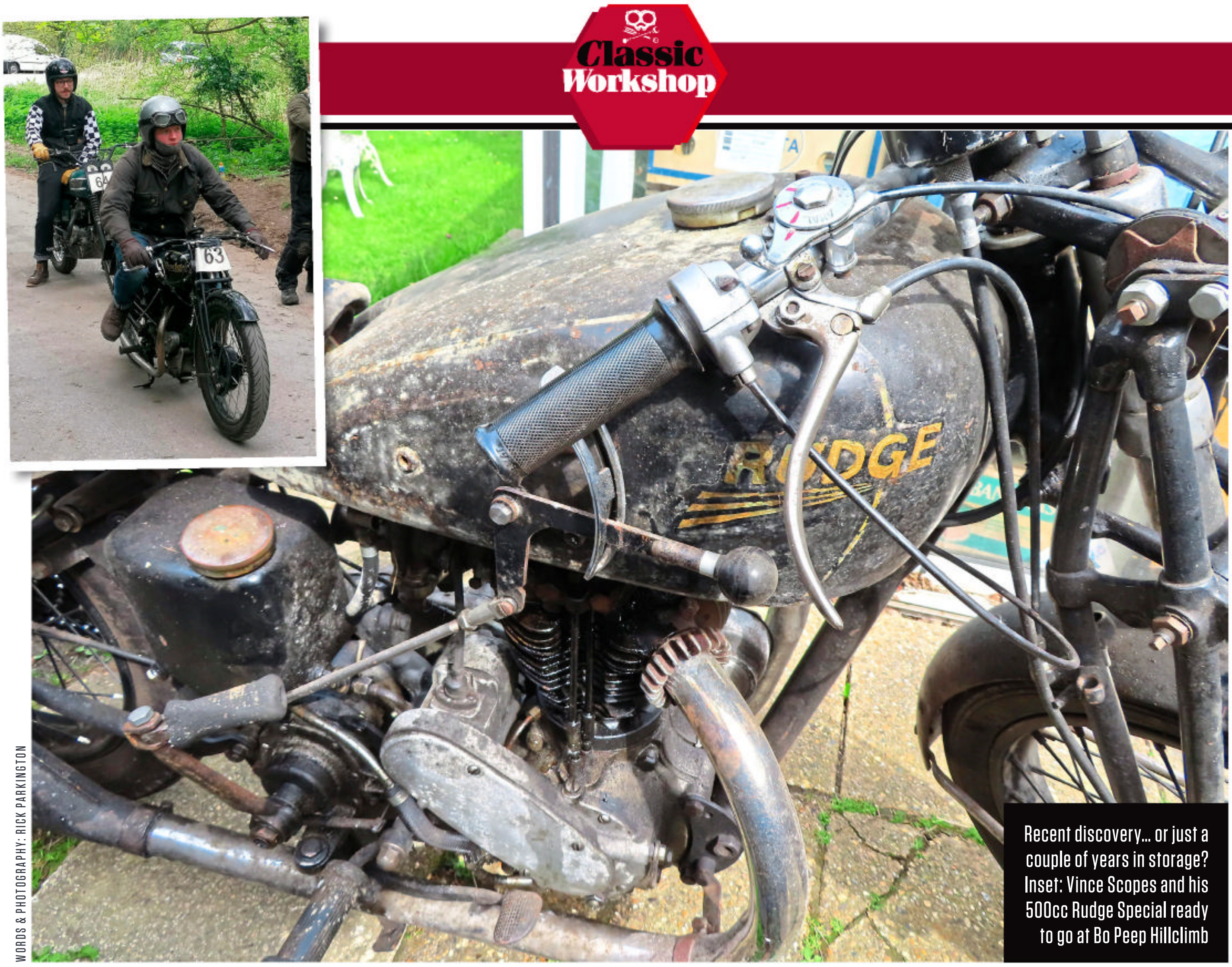


WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: RICK PARKINGTON

Recent discovery… or just a couple of years in storage? Inset: Vince Scopes and his 500cc Rudge Special ready to go at Bo Peep Hillclimb

– Tales from the workshop –

Rudge bears no grudge

Despite looking like a barn find, Rick's 1936 Ulster fires up first time after two years under a sheet

IT'S THE STUFF of dreams – you draw the bolt and, as the splintered wooden door creaks open, a shaft of sunlight streams in, casting your shadow over a vague form covered by junk in the corner. It's… surely not… yes, it's an old motorcycle! How many years had this old warhorse been sitting here, forgotten and gathering dust?

Well, from memory about two and a half. This mouldy old ruin is, in fact, the 1936 Rudge Ulster that I used extensively for shopping trips during the first government lockdown, back when the roads were midnight-quiet. Since then, the Rudge has been inaccessibly wedged in a dry but draughty shed – and while it wasn't exactly shiny beforehand, it's certainly taken a turn for the worse.

But appearances deceive and a wipe over with some oil soon had it looking ready for action again. With magneto ignition, there's no battery, so all I did was pour in some fresh fuel. And despite two years of neglect and a track racing Amal carb, the old warrior fired up first kick and ran as sweet as a nut!

You maybe wouldn't expect a bike this age to be so forgiving, but in a world where modern cars have defeated the devils of body rot and engine failure only to fall prey to electrical failure, on the Rudge there really is very little to go wrong. The tyres usually need a bit more air and sometimes magneto points tarnish while standing – sliding a bit of card about between them will usually sort that – but I've learned that when you have too many bikes in too many locations, simplicity is vital. There's no space for vac-bags, Optimates or any other panderings – they just have to work when I pull them out. And, strange as it may seem, I find the older they are the more able they are to cope with that.

I suppose it's because they were made for owners who rarely had the luxury of even a garden shed. Back then, bikes lived outdoors under a tarp, with maintenance performed in the road or back yard with basic hand tools. I find that simplicity very refreshing in a complicated world and I wonder if it's part of the reason the popularity of older classics has way outlasted their original owners.

My mate Vince Scopes was so inspired by rides on my Rudge that he sold his 500cc Triumph to buy a 1928 500cc Rudge Special. I saw him on it for the first time at the VMCC Bo Peep Hillclimb in April and felt proud of how he handled a bike over three times his age. "I just love it!" he shouted over the bark of the open pipes. Well, that's another young mind poisoned forever! As my mate Rob put it: "We need to show the younger generation the right way to go wrong!" Amen to that!

WHO IS RICK?
Rick Parkington has been riding and fixing classic bikes for decades. He lives and fettles in a fully tooled up shed in his back garden.

Rick Parkington's
Classic Bike Workshop

ILLUSTRATION: IAIN@1000WORDS.FI

Imperial Fixes

Problems with old Brits? Rick can help

Rick cogitates on your imperial problems

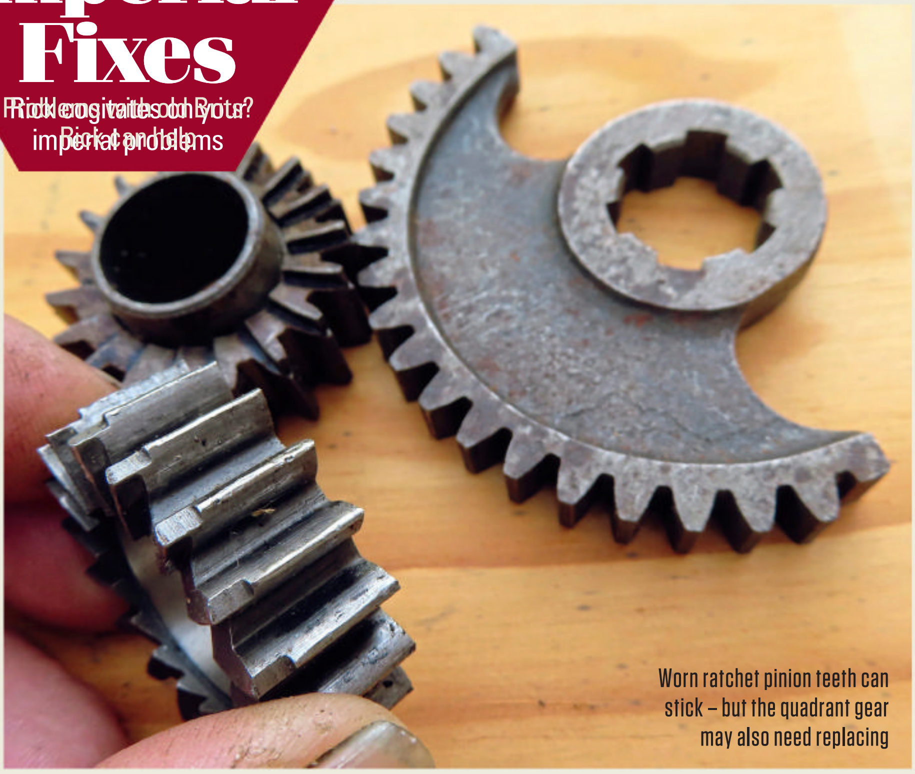
TRIUMPH T140

A kick with worn teeth

David Reid is having trouble kicking over his 1972 750 Bonneville. Having pulled the bike out after winter, he freed the clutch plates with a kick – but when he tried to turn the engine found it was stuck. Concerned it had seized, he removed the plugs. It then turned fine – until he replaced them again. Clutch lifted, the pedal freed enough to start the bike – but once stopped, it stuck again. “Any advice would be appreciated in case I’m causing damage to the engine,” says David.

I’d blame kickstarter ratchet wear. The teeth are designed so that if they meet point to point, they slip into engagement, but wear makes the points sharp and less able to free up, especially when the engine is resistant to moving. With the clutch lifted or plugs out, the engine moves more easily so the teeth can free. When wear is really bad, you have to engage gear and rock the bike to free it. A new ratchet pinion will probably cure the problem, but if the kickstarter quadrant is also worn, the trouble will recur sooner.

These parts suffer wear and tear – but for anyone new to kickstarting, it is important never to stamp on the pedal without feeling the ratchet engage before swinging.



Worn ratchet pinion teeth can stick – but the quadrant gear may also need replacing

---

The BSA Bantam is a simple bike with surprisingly complicated wiring

BSA BANTAM D7

Looming problems

After fitting a new wiring harness to his BSA D7 Bantam project, Doug Orchard can’t get a spark, and although the tail-light works, the stop light and horn are at best intermittent. He’s found a wiring diagram online that differs from that supplied and wonders if he should attempt to follow that instead.

Doug’s new harness is a Lucas copy of the original Wipac loom, labelled ‘S3536 – D7 coil ignition 1963-66’. According to my book, ‘3536’ is a coil set; the D7 harness should be ‘3538’. Just a misprint? Maybe, but the connections don’t seem right, either. Time to call electrics guru Ferret.

“There are never simple, single-sentence answers to wiring problems,” was Ferret’s quote of the day. “I have 21 different wiring diagrams for Bantams – and I doubt that’s all of them. That’s why I do individual rewires instead of just selling replacement looms. There’s too many variations – just the D7 model alone came with magneto or coil ignition, direct or battery lights; that’s four different looms for one model!”

Ferret confirmed Doug’s new harness is not correct for his bike – for example, it has just two alternator connections where there should be three, and five wires to the ignition switch where there should be six, so it looks like he’s back to square one – unless he is able to modify the new harness to match the correct ‘3538’ diagram he found online.

HONDA TL125

Tank rust problems

Derek Mortin tells me that although his 1975 Honda TL125 Trials tank is good, with just a little surface rust on the steel, after flushing it out last autumn the dregs came out rusty brown. He flushed it again, ready for riding in spring, and the same thing happened. He asks: “What do you do to keep your tanks clean/protected, and do you drain them over winter?”

Tanks rusting isn’t purely to do with age; when water gets into the tank from a contaminated supply, a cap leak or the moisture-absorbent nature of ethanol-based petrol, it forms droplets that sink to the bottom. Pressed tank seams on later classics provide a crease into which the water can seep and begin corroding – I suspect that’s where Derek’s brown residue came from, and unfortunately it’s not good news.

Yes, I drain my bikes’ tanks for layup – and I leave the cap off so that fuel and (I hope) water can evaporate. Some people advocate sealing the tank to protect it, but if the sealant fails it just creates further pockets for damp to lurk. Others fill the tank to the brim to keep out moisture-laden air, but that way any water already inside will stay there. The severity of the problem will certainly depend on how dry the bike is stored – but sadly, very few of us have heated garages. If anyone out there has any other tips to pass on, please do let me know.

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: RICK PARKINGTON

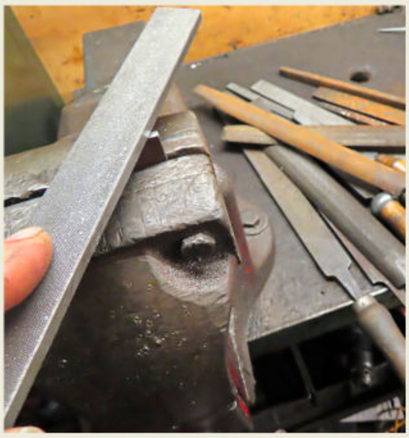
At the workbench

Rick Parkington

This month's workshop activity involved new approaches to essential tool maintenance, and a surprise online find solved the issue of sourcing steel tubing for frame repairs...

Tip

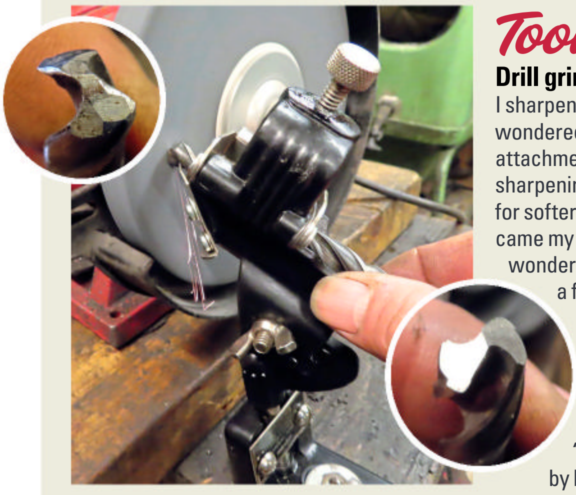
Stay on top of your filing



It's not easy to get good quality files these days, so I look out for 'old stock' ones – and take care of them. But, however good or well looked-after, like hacksaw blades they wear out. That's a slow process, so you don't notice and keep them forever, slogging away without noticing the gradual decline in effect. My solution is to put a bit of mild steel in the vice every now and then and try them all out. The good, sharp ones soon reveal any slackers. Then all I have to do is discipline myself to finally put them out for scrap!

Tool

Drill grinding attachment

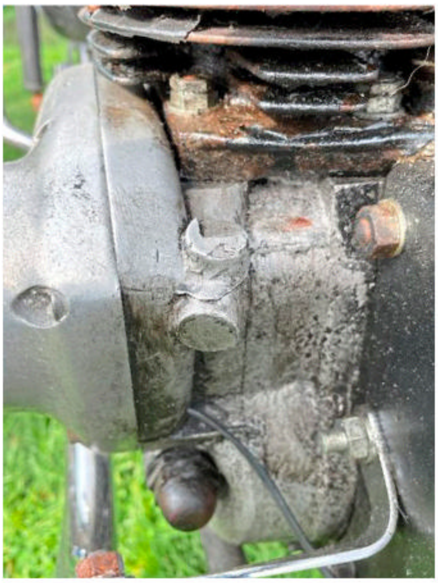


I sharpen my drills by hand, but often wondered whether these 'drill grinding attachments' are any good. As well as sharpening, they can alter cutting angles for softer materials, so when this old one came my way I was keen to try it. Huh, no wonder it's 'boxed and little used'! It's a faff to set up and lacks rigidity – although, with patience, it produced a fair job. I'll save it for reclaiming broken drills and keep sharpening by hand! As someone on a forum put it: 'It's easier to learn sharpening by hand than using one of these!'

Specialist

Steelwork2016, eBay

Needing 18 inches of 10-gauge one-inch 'cold drawn seamless' tubing for a frame repair used to be a problem; it's specialist enough that even a mate in the trade might not get exactly what you wanted. Online shopping has certainly helped here; 'Steelworx2016' on eBay supply short lengths (up to 1100mm), carriage free for under £20 each. Sizing is metric, so you need to convert – one inch x 10g (0.128in thick) becomes 25.4mm x 3.2mm. It's costlier per inch than buying trade lengths – but how much do you need? For most of us, storage space isn't exactly free, either!



Mystery casting feature harks back to engine disasters at Daytona in '66

TRIUMPH T120

More mystery castings

Thanks for all the suggestions about the curious boss on a Triumph 650 engine sprocket. The first correct answer came from Greg Wheadon, who said it was for an alternator rotor locating peg for Energy Transfer ignition models. This battery-free ignition system synchronised points break with the peak of the alternator's pulse, making rotor position critical. Great idea... but reliant on very accurate points settings. The theory didn't match reality, hence the casting boss falling into disuse. Fortunately, Lucas developed the '2MC Ignition Capacitor' soon after, which smoothed alternator impulses to provide a good spark throughout.

But Greg raised another question. He asked if I can explain this strange casting on the crankcase of a 1967 500cc Daytona (above).

I have seen it before – rarely – and fancied it's to do with supplying oil to the exhaust camshaft, 650cc models adopting an internal supply drilling for this around that time. Confirmation came from Mick Duckworth's excellent book, *Triumph Experimental*. For the Daytona race in 1966, Triumph had separate exhaust cam oil-feed pipes, but it starved the big ends, causing a series of crank breakages. For 1967, a new camshaft hardening process solved the problem, so I think this casting is a leftover from those race engines. Funnily enough, I entered the bike trade in time to catch Honda's 1980s cam wear disasters – just goes to prove that even major manufacturers are never far from the design learning curve!

Got a problem that requires Rick's expertise? Send your query to him at **workshop@classicbike.co.uk**

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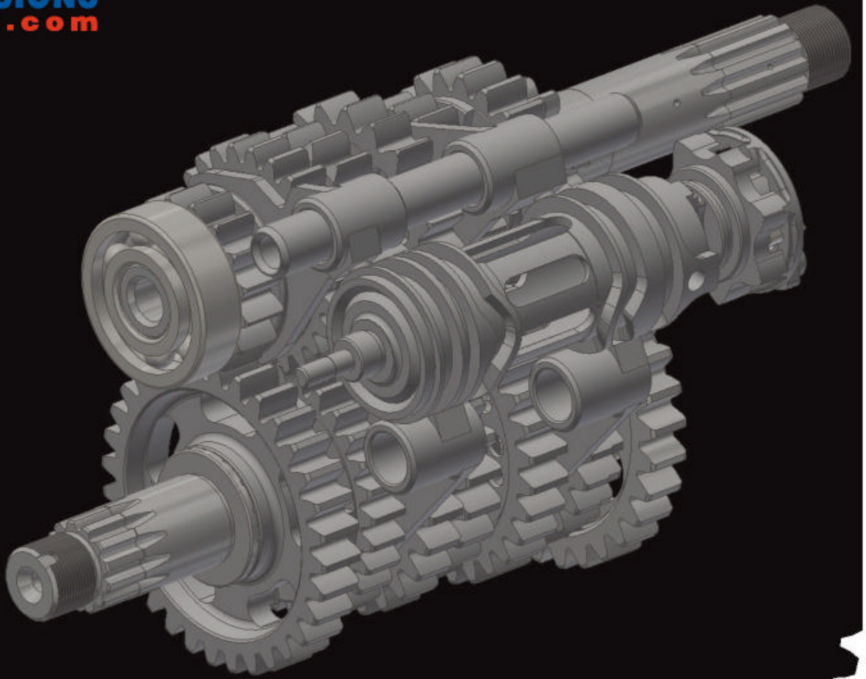

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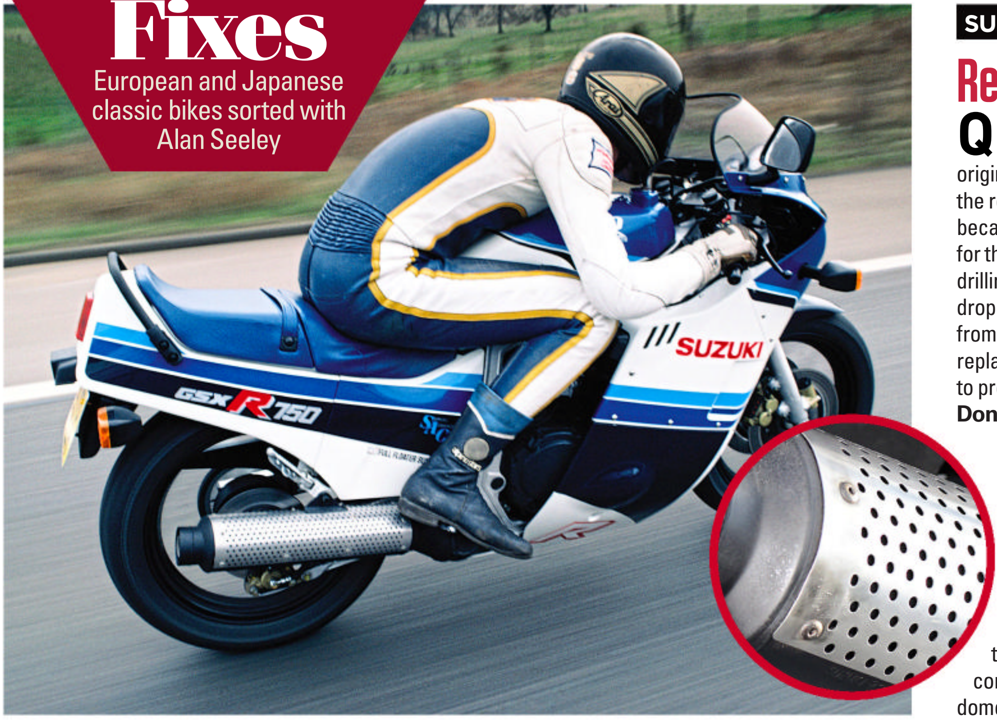
Metric Fixes

European and Japanese classic bikes sorted with Alan Seeley



DOUGIE FIRTH

SUZUKI GSX-R750

Replacing rivets

Q Most of the jobs I had to do to return my much-modified 1985 Suzuki GSX-R750 to original are now complete. I have been putting off the renovation of the original stock exhaust because I'm not sure what to do about the rivets for the silencer heatshield. It seems to me that drilling the tops off will cause the other ends to drop into the can. Also, I don't think any old rivets from my local hardware shop will be adequate replacements because they won't seal sufficiently to prevent exhaust gases blowing by.

Don Eller, email

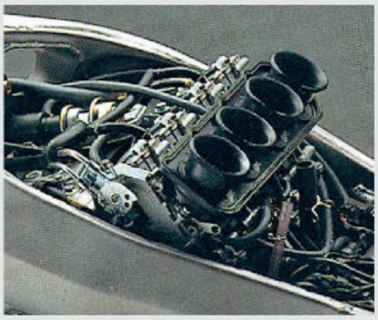
A You should be able to shake out the remnants of the old rivets or they will blow themselves out or into a corner where they won't cause any problems. When it comes to replacements, track down some sealed blind rivets of the correct diameter. These specialist fasteners are distinct from the conventional ones in that the 'top hat' component of the rivet is closed and covers the domed end of the rivet centre.

KAWASAKI ZX-7R

Carb icing cure

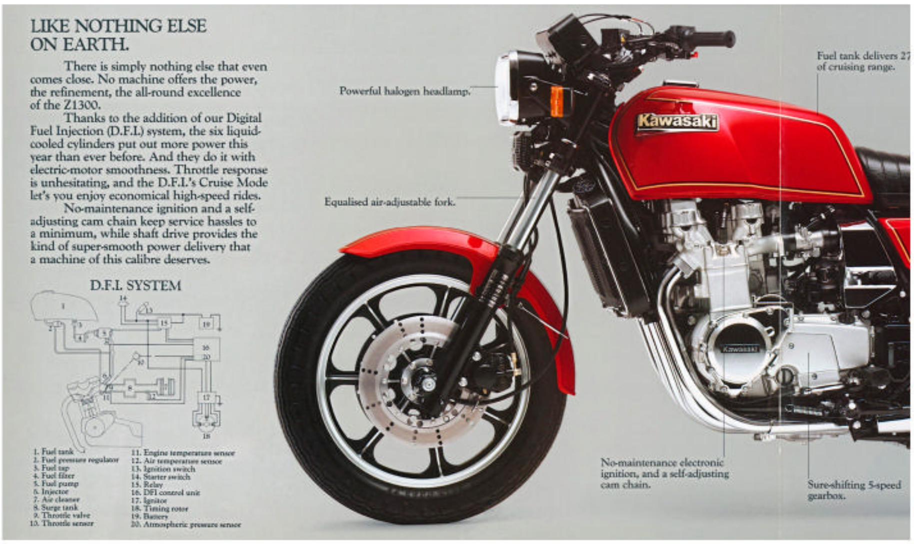
Q Great to see the Kawasaki ZX-7R getting some love in the pages of *Classic Bike*. I note that editor Wilson is having some carb problems and I have some of my own. The bike suffers from fuel starvation and even stalls when I transition from fast roads onto slower ones. If I stop for a few minutes, the problem sorts itself out. I know that some Kawasakis have a reputation for carb icing, but the ZX-7R has carb heaters. What do you think is going on?

Kevin Barradell, email



KAWASAKI

A You are correct on two counts. It is indeed carb icing, and the ZX-7R does have carb heaters. The ZX-7R's heater system runs hot coolant to the carbs in an attempt to stop the icing. All well and good until the tiny filter in the pipe serving the carb heaters becomes blocked. Put the cleaning of that on your regular maintenance schedule and things should vastly improve.



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KAWASAKI

Above: Original Z1300 brochure made a big play of its DFI system – but TPS fix might cure its rich running

KAWASAKI Z1300

All a bit rich

Q My 1984 Kawasaki ZN 1300 has the DFI fuel system and is constantly running rich. Compression tests are OK across all six cylinders. I have completed numerous jobs without any improvement. These include: fuel injectors tested and all OK; black box controller for the FI sent to a specialist and checks out fine; all engine sensors checked and working; fuel pressure regulator replaced with new OEM item; spark plugs changed several times; valve clearances checked; fuel rail exchanged.

I'm running out of ideas. The bike over-fuels at start up, runs lumpy and backfires, then blackens the plugs. The new fuel pressure regulator has improved tickover, but that's about it. What should I check next? Could it be electrical somehow?

Ian Day, email

A How frustrating. Might I suggest a closer look at the throttle position sensor (TPS)? This is essentially just a potentiometer (variable resistor). However, its condition and adjustment are critical. Inspect and test the unit as per the manual. You'll need a multimeter to check its resistance. All being well, refit the TPS then check the voltage from the centre wire to earth. It seems these are rather finicky on voltage, so use a quality meter. With the throttle closed, you're looking for around 5v or a couple of hundredths of a volt below that. A little below and it will run richer at idle, a little higher and it will run leaner. Reposition the TPS until you get the correct voltage. With the throttle open, the reading should be from 0.64 to 0.74v.

WORDS: ALAN SEELEY PHOTOGRAPHY: ALAN SEELEY & BAUER AUTOMOTIVE

SEND YOUR METRIC PROBLEMS TO
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HONDA VFR750

Pulsing lever

Q There's a rather alarming pulsing at the lever when I apply the front brakes on my 1995 Honda VFR750. I'm thinking warped discs, but am having trouble finding any discernible run-out. If I do need to replace the discs, can I safely do so with some of the budget options on eBay? My bike is really just an occasional hack and it's hard to justify spending half of what it's worth on discs. Although, as an emerging classic, I might restore it one day…
Danny Stein, email

A Don't be too quick to write off the discs. First port of call here is the calipers. Check that the pistons are moving freely. Then look to see whether the calipers are free to slide on their pins, something that is often overlooked on the Nissin sliding calipers fitted to your bike. Also investigate whether there is dirt and corrosion around the bobbins between the rotor and carrier, as this will prevent the disc from aligning properly. If it does prove to be that the discs are warped, cheap Chinese eBay offerings are a false economy. After all that, if it still turns out to be the discs, please avoid unknown brands on the internet. EBC offer great value for money, so opt for those or something comparable.

HONDA VTR1000 SP-1

Let's get this started

Q Despite fitting a new fully-charged battery to my 2001 Honda SP-1, the bike point-blank refuses to turn over. I've put new brushes in the starter motor and it turns over when I apply power directly to it. The relay tests OK, the fuel pump primes, but the starter motor cable gets very warm when I push the button.
Matt Watson, email

A When an electrical cable behaves like a heater element, that's a sure sign of high resistance somewhere in the system. Inspect your earths and the ignition and kill switches, as well as the connector blocks serving them. A multimeter set to resistance will be a great help here. I anticipate that you will find a build-up of green corrosion on the terminals in one or more of the connectors. I recently had a similar problem and found nearly 200 ohms across an ignition switch where it should have been no more than three or four ohms. A wire brush and some switch cleaner will get things right.

At the workbench

Alan Seeley

This month, Alan's ruing decades of chewed up screws, and dreaming of a tank-building course… but not before a trip to his local carpet warehouse!

Tip

Carpet samples for the workbench
Price: Free
Where? Your local flooring emporium
We all like 'free' – it fits the reuse and recycle ethos at the heart of classic motorcycling. My hydraulic workbench has a metal top, and the melamine surface of the table I do engine work on is barely more forgiving. A few squares of carpet sample provide an easily relocatable soft surface on which to place parts you either don't want to scratch or prefer not to have rolling around. They also arrest the progress of anything you might drop while working on a bike, so I always position a few under the area I'm working on.

Tool

Laser 7520 T-handle JIS screwdriver
Price: £15
Where? Various online suppliers
For the first 30 years of my motorcycle spannering adventures, like many of my peers I was convinced Japanese crosshead screws were made from something akin to pot metal. Countless heads were chewed up with a Phillips screwdriver. Then some wise soul pointed out the screws are Japanese Industrial Standard (JIS) and the heads are different. You'll know them by the little dot punched in one of the quarters formed by the crosshead. I haven't ruined one since.

Specialist

Etto Motorcycles
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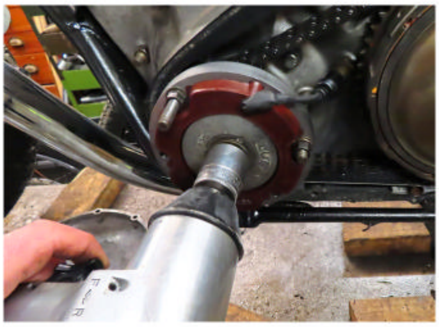
WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: RICK PARKINGTON

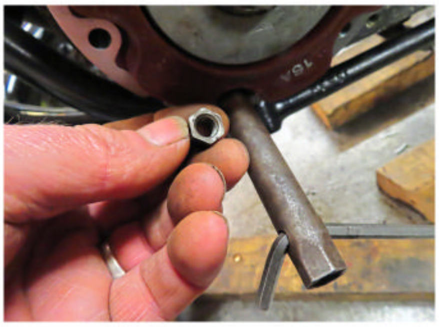
How to...

Fit a Lucas alternator

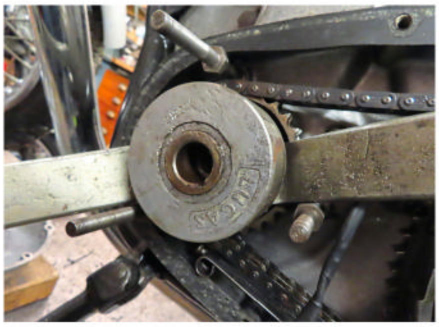
Here's how we successfully navigated the task as part of last month's Triumph Thunderbird project



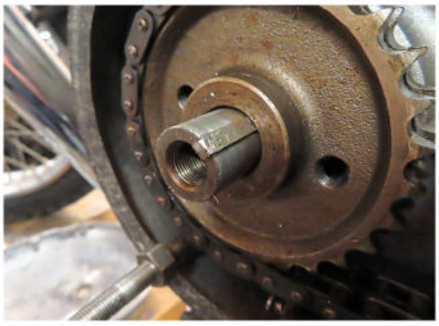
1 Air 'rattle gun' is ideal to undo the rotor nut, using shock against engine inertia without need to wedge anything in the chain. Applying brake in gear is recommended but seldom works. If you do wedge the chain, by putting something between it and the sprocket, make sure you're not overloading anything else.



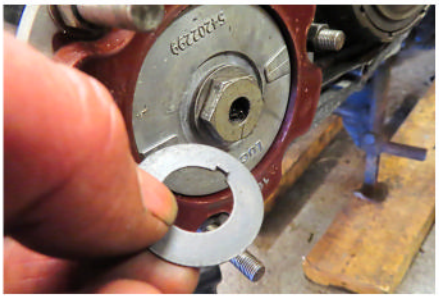
2 Open coil alternators had more space, but with later resin-encapsulated type it's best to use reduced hex (next spanner size down) nuts on the stator, giving room for a slim socket or box spanner. Carefully remove the stator; the laminated core tends to snag the threads of the studs so keep it flat. Don't force it.



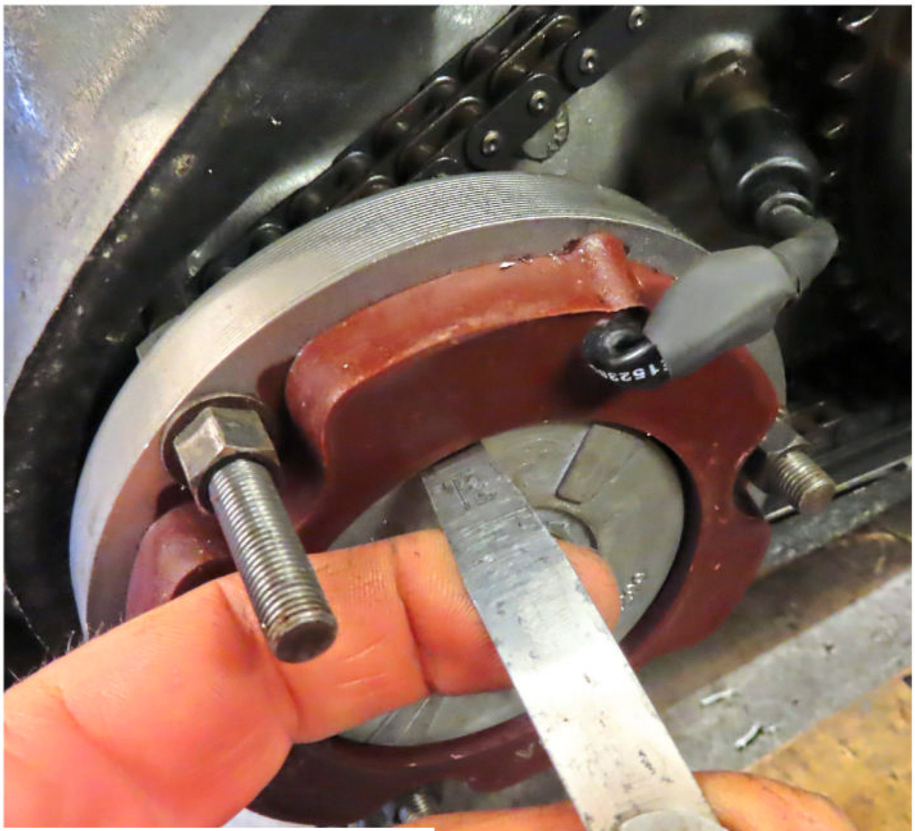
3 If you're lucky, the rotor will be a tight enough fit on the crank to not simply pull off by hand. Note: these tyre levers are bearing on the sprocket behind NOT the crankcase. If rotor is loose it may be the cast-in steel centre has worked free inside or crankshaft and key/keyway are worn – this needs sorting.



4 A new key should be a tight fit in the keyway; if not, the crank will need to be removed and re-machined. A new rotor is the best way round a centre that has fretted loose. The symptom here is a thumping sound at tickover that goes with revs. Magnetism causes a loose rotor to rock from pole to pole of stator.



5 Because the rotor nut was fitted with Loctite, it unscrewed the stud in the crank. I replaced it with a little more Loctite than I use on the nut, so it will hopefully stay put next time. I avoid the factory tab washer as they're soft and I find they crush and work loose. I prefer a plain washer and locking fluid.



6 After refitting any part of an alternator, and tightening the bolts, it is essential to check air gap. Disaster follows the rotor rubbing the stator. You should be able to fit a 10 thou feeler blade all round. Then turn the engine and try again; a slight misalignment on the crank may make it tight in one place.

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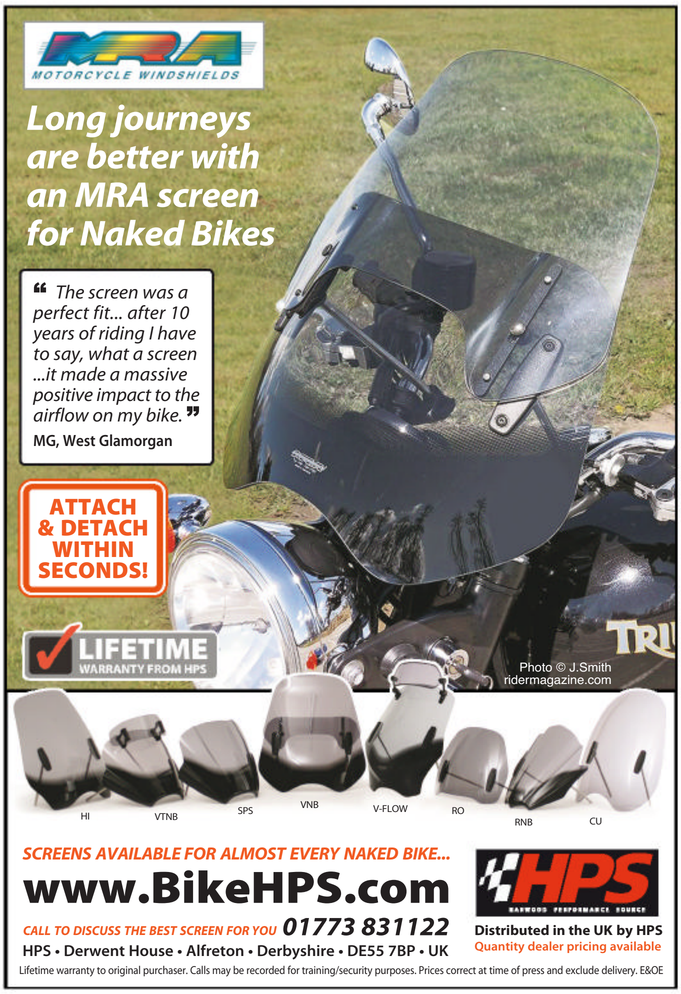

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PROJECT HARRIS MAGNUM

Alan goes back to the source in an attempt to revive his butchered frame

Original Magnum 2 bodywork was designed by the company responsible for the Katana

PART 1

Starting over

This motley collection of parts will become a Harris Magnum 2, and fortunately Harris are prepared to help us achieve that goal

WORDS: ALAN SEELEY PHOTOGRAPHY: SIMON LEE AND ALAN SEELEY

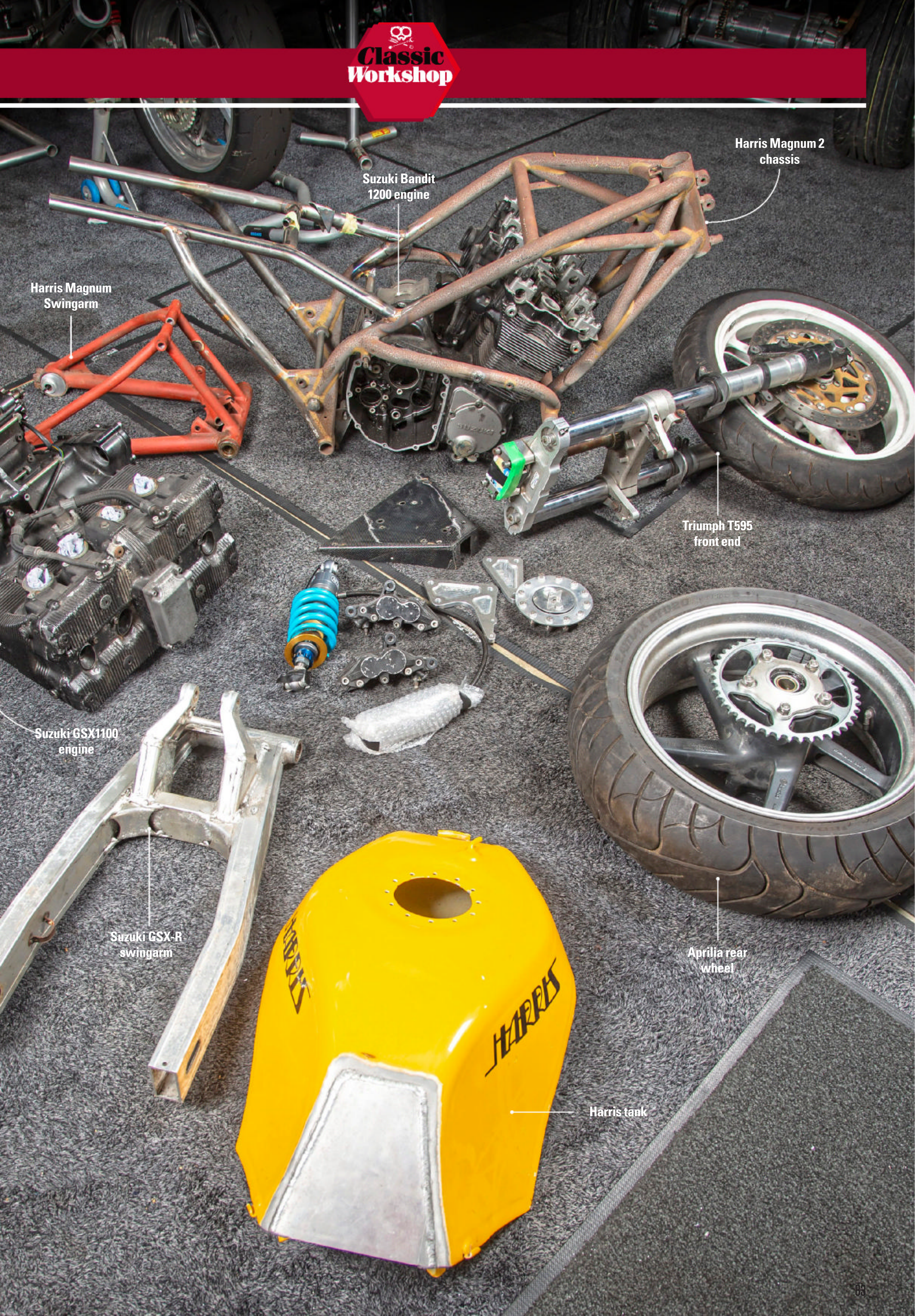
CB contributor Alan Seeley bought a butchered Harris Magnum project. He's currently moving forward with his plan to put it back together as a big, fast road bike.

ACCORDING TO THE records at Harris Performance Products, when this Magnum 2 – frame number HP699 – was dispatched from their Hertford workshop in December 1984 it was fitted with Marzocchi forks, Harris yokes, Dymag wheels, and was intended to house a Suzuki GSX1100 engine. All those ancillaries were long gone when it came into my hands last year. And time, and multiple owners, haven't been kind to the once elegant tubework, either.

The Magnum 2 was launched in 1982, intended for eager sports bike riders who wanted a chassis capable of exploiting all of the performance of the large-capacity four-strokes of the day. Fabricated from bronze-welded Reynolds 501 tubing, the perimeter frames used the engine as a stressed member and delivered handling that the manufacturers of the bikes which donated their motors were still a decade away from offering as standard.

Bodywork came from the drawing boards of Anglo-German firm Target Design, who were also responsible for another 1980s design icon – the Suzuki Katana. A variety of engines benefitted from installation in a Harris Magnum chassis – Kawasaki Z1000s, Suzuki GS1000 and GSX1100s, Honda CB900s and even Laverda Jotas.

Back in the day it should have been a beautiful thing. But this one certainly wasn't when I bought it, as an incomplete project, from drag racing friend Paul Morris. Prior to coming into Paul's ownership, the frame's main section has been modified to take a later air/oil-cooled Suzuki Bandit 1200 engine in place of the original air-cooled GSX1100 power unit. Someone had also chopped off the rear of the frame


Harris Magnum 2 chassis
Suzuki Bandit 1200 engine
Harris Magnum Swingarm
Triumph T595 front end
Suzuki GSX1100 engine
Suzuki GSX-R swingarm
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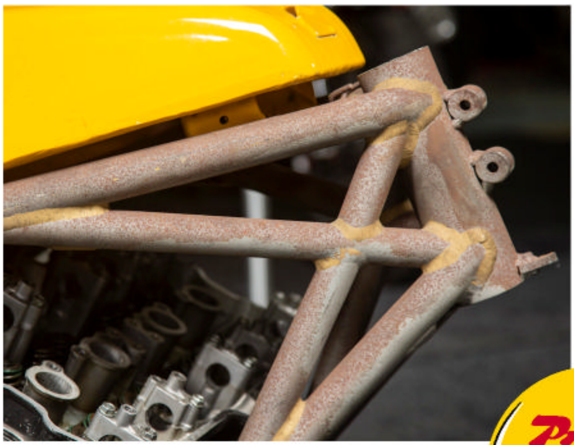
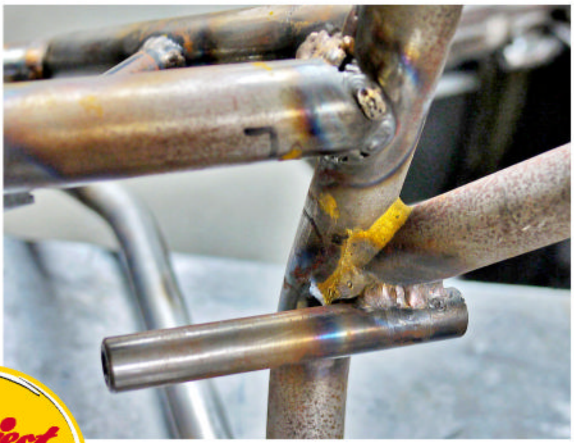
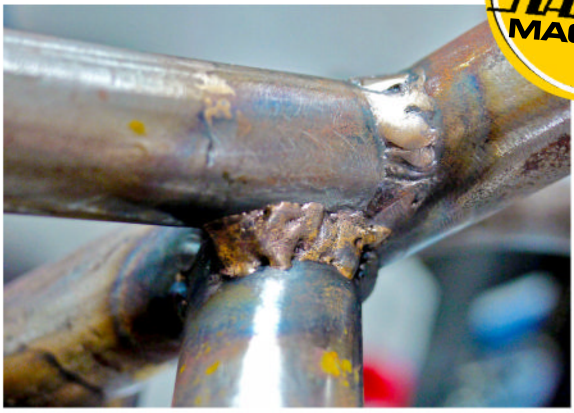


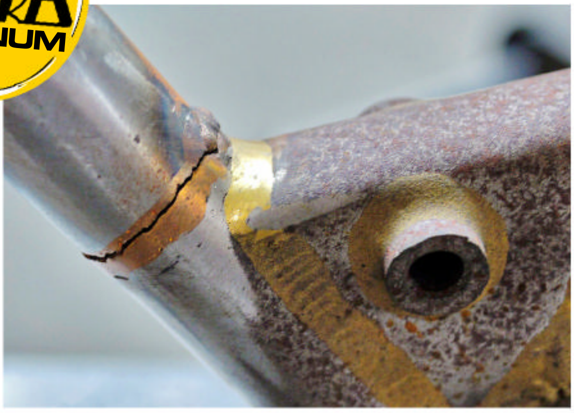
Right: Harris's original bronze welds look great after 40 years. Tubes have survived less well



Far right: Replacement tubing and non-factory welds are easy to spot. Looks like the amateur welder lost interest before getting all the way round the join



Right: Even using a power file – the last resort of the slipshod welder – has done little to make these welds acceptable



Far right: This weld gave up before home-brewed remedial works were complete. Doesn't bode well for the other frame mods

> **'MY VISION FOR THE PROJECT IS TO BUILD SOMETHING THAT LOOKS ROUGHLY RIGHT FOR THE PERIOD'**

in a criminal attempt to make a café racer out of the bike. Paul and a friend had starting work on reinstating the back section of the chassis at the time I bought it.

The package I purchased included a 30,000-mile Bandit engine, a Triumph T595 front end in some custom yokes, Triumph brake calipers and a pair of Aprilia wheels. My deal with Paul also included a hard-to-find fuel tank, Harris cap, F2 seat unit, carbon-fibre electrics tray, original but hacked about swingarm, a Suzuki GSX-R swingarm and a new Nitron shock intended for a Honda CB900 Hornet, as well as some Harris rearset plates.

Right: Alan's managed to pick up a low-mileage Suzuki GSX1100 engine for £500

JASON CRITCHELL

Knowing that the frame needed work in any case, I thought about sourcing a GSX1100 engine and having the chassis put back to original. Suzuki four-stroke specialist Gary Hurd initially talked me out of that idea. "Have you seen how much one of those engines is, let alone how much they cost to rebuild? You'll easily do £4k," he said. "Stick with the Bandit." So we did. At least to start with.

The initial process of starting work was documented in *CB*'s sister title *Practical Sportsbikes*, but there have been a couple of significant developments that prompted a radical change of approach. First, I had a call from Gary to say that he had found a low-miles late GSX1100 engine and it could be mine for £500. A no-brainer at that sort of money, but it would mean a lot more work on the frame – work that would have to be done on a proper jig. Second, *Practical Sportsbikes* closed. So here we are, starting again.

My vision for the project is to build something that looks roughly right for the period – but I'm working to a budget, so I'll be compromising on using many more readily available components. There's no money for a set of Dymags, at least for now, so the Aprilia wheels and Triumph forks and brakes will be used. And will that Nitron shock be suitable? I want to build a fast, comfy, useable road bike that's capable of covering big miles.

With the chassis now needing more than a relatively straightforward refresh, it was time to go back to source. I called Harris Performance and talked to Steve Bayford,

Project
HARRIS
MAGNUM

Alan with Nick Daish at the Harris workshop. Next month the frame will look better...

who co-founded the firm in 1972 along with Harris brothers Lester and the late Steve.

I was almost embarrassed to tell him of the past indignities that had been heaped upon my frame, but Steve was most reassuring: "People have done all kinds of things to our frames over the years. We've seen the lot. Making specials out of specials. How much 'special' could they possibly want? I can't promise what we can do or how much it might cost until we've seen it, so bring the frame over. There's even a good chance that the guy who originally built your frame is still working here," he said.

'HARRIS STILL HAD THE JIG MY FRAME WAS BUILT IN'

A few days later, I headed to Harris to be greeted by Dominic Ferrar, the firm's performance engineering manager. "Well, we've seen worse," was his initial reaction. I looked at Dominic, then back at the mouldering frame and tried to imagine just what 'worse' might look like.

"Don't worry. We're keen to help with the project," he said, and went to fetch tubework and welding torch genius Nick Daish, from the recesses of the workshop. Nick has been with Harris since 1978 and is more than likely the artisan who built my frame in the first place.

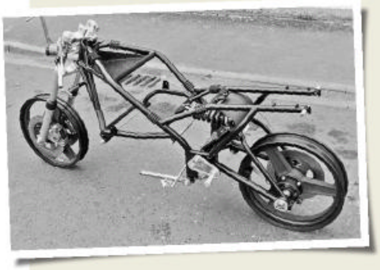
Vowing to preserve as much of the original tubework as possible, Nick estimated he could save perhaps 40% of it. Harris still had the jig on which the frame would have been built stashed away in storage – and with that in the workshop, along with my engine, he was ready to get to work.

Next month you'll be able to see what Nick has done and a proper dry build can get under way.

Where the Magnum 2 fits

The Magnum 2, you might have guessed, is the successor to the Harris Magnum 1, designed in 1973 and based on the Kawasaki Z1 Harris endurance racer campaigned by Mike Trimby and Marty Lund.

It arrived in 1982, its futuristic Target Design styling and on-point handling made it a top choice for racers and customisers, housing engines from Honda to Suzuki via Kawasaki and Laverda. Thousands have been built; some at Harris, many by home enthusiasts.



The Magnum 3 came along in 1984 as a far better place to fit a Kawasaki GPZ750 Turbo than the stock chassis.

In 1991, the Magnum 4 (below) offered a much-needed chassis upgrade for the Suzuki GSX-R1100, and a less urgent but still brilliant alternative for the 750.

The 1992 Magnum 5 was designed for the then-new Honda FireBlade. Could Harris do better than a Honda? Of course.

Harris will still build you any of their designs today; the Magnum 2 remains one of the most popular. Harris currently list the Kawasaki Z1000, Z1000J, GPZ1100, and Suzuki GS1000, GSX1100 and Bandit 1200 engines as options for which they will build a Magnum 2 frame. You'll pay £2415 with a £335 upcharge for GPZ1100, Z1000J and Bandit 1200 engines.

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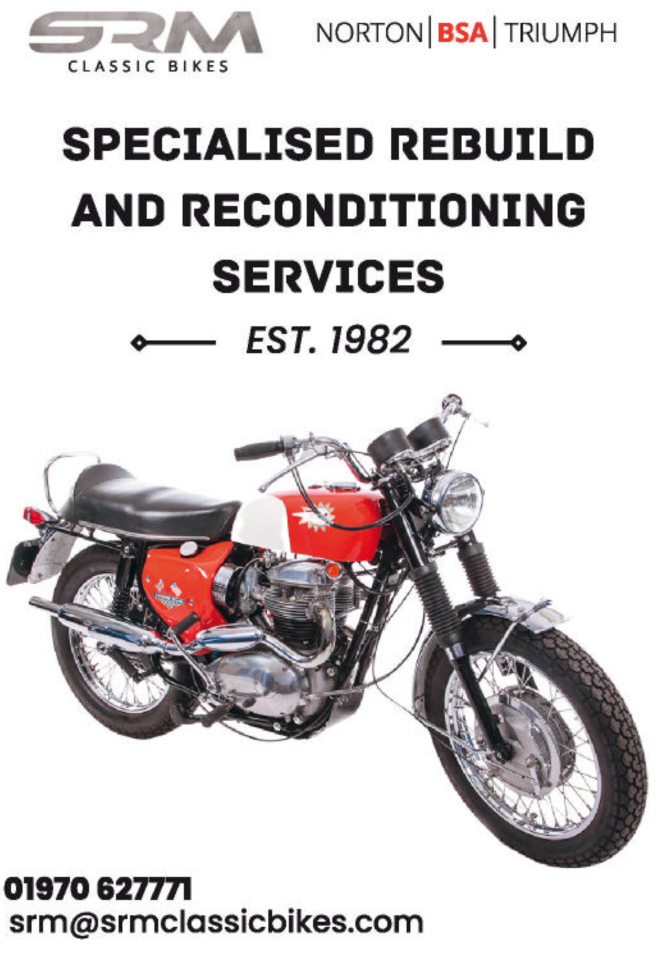

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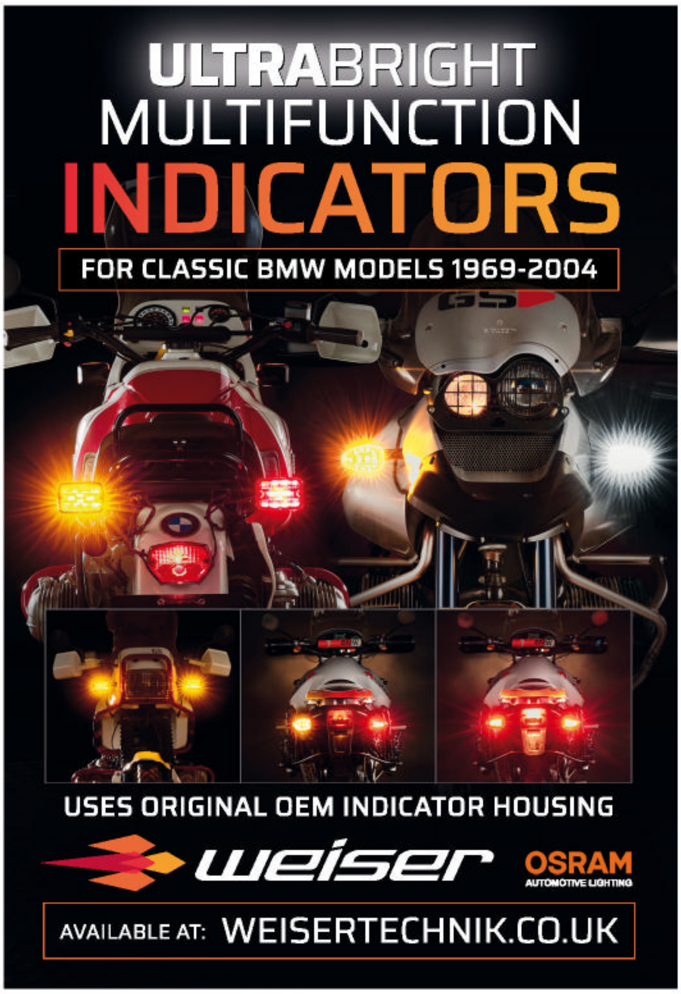

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Winding it on

Mark and his mates load up a van with their classics, head for the Highlands to get involved in May's VMCC Highland International Rally and have a high old time

After a breakdown-free trip to the Netherlands in February, Mark looks to extend his '75 Guzzi T3 California's extraordinary run of reliability with the prospect of 550 miles of Scottish touring…

AS WE BARREL along the straight and into the next corner, the Guzzi has become totally infatuated with this snake of tarmac. It embraces the bend like it's falling into the arms of a long-lost lover, all passion and heat. With a twist of the hips and a caress of counter-steer, we're through in a delicious ooze of centrifugal force. A big handful of throttle pushes the V-twin further towards its snarly edge of ecstasy as we prepare for the pleasure of doing it all again and again.

We're hurtling along the A832 from Kinlochewe to Inverewe – a real Guzzi road, fast and flowing with open, sinuous bends. Over the past three days and 500 miles, we've enjoyed each other's company so much up here in the Scottish Highlands that it almost feels like we've become one entity. We're totally bonded, with the engine hot, Mr Tonti's frame as solid as the granite mountain ranges and the Bridgestones gripping like the talons of the raptor hovering overhead. It's hard to imagine how life could get any better than this.

It's impossible not to get all wide-eyed and metaphysical when the sun's out and you're careering along Scotland's west coast. This is a special place – the organisers of the VMCC Highland Rally have saved the best till last and have been repaid with the most glorious weather of our time up here. There's spectacular sunshine interspersed with enough passing cumulus to add to the topographical drama.

I see this trip as payback for eight years of upgrading the Guzzi, enduring its fits of electrical cussedness and breakdowns, and keeping the faith in its long-distance abilities. I know that it cokes up its plugs around every 200-300 miles or so, but why should I try to solve that when the bike's stomping along like a force of nature these days? I'm prepared for it now, with a spare set, cleaned and gapped, always stashed under the seat. Swapping them over on the second day, after I sense the engine's symptomatic grumpiness, is the only attention the bike requires for my whole time at the rally.

Of course, pleasure never just falls into your lap – you have to work towards it. We – my friends Alan and Keith and myself – had decided to cover the 490 miles from our home to the rally's base, the town of Strathpeffer, with our bikes in the back of a van. I've managed to inveigle them both into the world of classic bikes recently. Days before we set off, Alan bought a '76 Morini 3½ Strada, desiring a power upgrade from the Suzuki X5 on which he accompanied me and the Guzzi on a 1500-mile ride to the Piston Rally and back last September. Both of these were to be loaded into the van, along with Keith's purchase, a 1980 Honda CX500,

and the Guzzi. Three Stooges-style comedy was to follow as we squeezed in the Guzzi, X5 and Morini, only to discover that the CX would not fit in the space remaining. Out came the X5, the CX was shoehorned in (after one of its footpegs was removed) and the X5 wiggled in at the back… eventually. Nine hours of multi-carriageway pounding ensued.

We arrived at the Highland Hotel in the early evening, in time for dinner, where we met some fellow rallyists. We were soon swapping tales with the amenable bunch on our table, with the banter continuing to the bar before we retired to bed in anticipation of the dawn of our first day's riding.

Having breakfasted and amused ourselves with Alan's attempts to coerce the left-foot kickstart Morini into life, we headed north towards Culrain, taking in a single-track road with a central moraine of gravel that focused the mind wonderfully. I really enjoy the challenge of riding the Guzzi on this kind of road. We then headed north-west through Oykel Bridge to Laxford Bridge, then headed south on the west coast road. Turning right onto the B869 saw us pitched onto another demanding and thrillingly yomping single-track road, through the most fabulous scenery. The area is peppered with hundreds of mini-lochs encrusted with water lilies, all dominated by the sugar-loaf mount of Suilven rising out of this densely-forested area that looks like The Land That Time Forgot. Even the occasional NC500-bothering Porsches and camper vans, which occasionally forced emergency stops into passing places, didn't spoil the fun, with the Guzzi's linked brakes never locking up. After a lunch stop at Lochinver, we headed back to the hotel for dinner after a fine day's riding in overcast but mainly dry conditions.

The next day saw us head south-east into the Cairngorms, passing the ski lifts of Aviemore and taking in more open heath and moorland-type roads which the Guzzi lapped up with gusto. It was a less intense day, with a more relaxed feel – and again, we were blessed with mainly dry weather. Arriving back at the hotel, we had more of a chance to take in the extraordinary variety of bikes at the rally – everything from Aermacchi Harleys through to Japanese two-strokes and Vincents. But all were unified by the common thread of owners who love them for what they are – machines to be ridden and enjoyed rather than hard-nosed, inert investments.

That final third day is one that will live on in the memory for a long, long time, with that coastal stretch from Applecross to Interewe being the highlight of the whole rally for me. As I pulled into the lunch stop at Osgood's Café (which serves superb sarnies and soup), wide-eyed after that blast on the Guzzi, a Geordie fella made a point of coming up to me. I'd seen his headlight in my rear-view mirror as he'd gamely attempted to keep up, two-up, along that stretch of Guzzi road. His wife was beaming from ear to ear, and as he approached me he announced: "Why, man – when she lifts up her skirts and goes, she doesn't half shift!"

She does, mate. She really does.

Above, left to right: Mark and the Guzzi, Alan and the Morini, Keith and the CX at Lochcarron

Left: 'Er… where did this go again?' Alan gets strapping while Keith supervises

Below: The Guzzi took to the roads in the Cairngorms like a duck to water – and luckily very little of that fell from the sky

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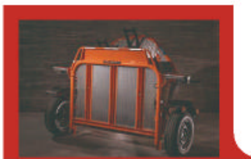

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Compiled by Gez Kane

HONDA & YAMAHA

Honda XL250 Motosport

Yamaha DT250MX

CHOOSER

Honda XL250 vs Yamaha DT250MX

We pit this pair of 1970s Japanese trailies against each other to see which one comes out on top as a potential purchase in the 2020s

What's the attraction?

In the '70s, the motorcycle world was only just waking up to the concept of genuine, go-anywhere bikes that were equally at home on the road or dirt. Trail bikes were hot tickets in Europe and the US, with Yamaha's DT range and Honda's XL models probably the pick of the bunch.

In 2023 they are still a really compelling proposition, offering great looks in a lightweight, fun and easy to ride package.

Which is the obvious choice?

The Honda arrived in 1972, with the four-stroke XL combining gorgeous styling with decent off-road capability. It might be heavier than the Yamaha stroker, but the Honda makes up for it with its wonderfully forgiving power delivery. Later versions of the XL250 may be more competent on the trail, but the original Motosport model is a true classic.

The Honda probably has more classic credentials and its compact ohc four-valve engine is a jewel. It'll pull from nothing and its relatively heavy crank flywheels make finding grip on slippery going easy – at least partly compensating for the XL's hefty 115kg. It's the looks and build quality of the Honda that count for most, though. The stunningly simple colour scheme, elegantly slim tank and the neatly tucked-in exhaust system are sure to attract many more admiring glances than even the impressive engine spec-sheet will. It's a case of engineering meets art

The XL250 Motosport may not be the perfect off-roader – in stock trim, anyway – and it might not be the best road bike ever. But, as a trail bike, it's a genuine classic.

And the alternative?

Yamaha's DT250MX not only looks the part, it's also great fun to ride – on road or trail, as long as you're not expecting enduro-class ability. Not only that, it's great value, too – and not too valuable to actually throw at rocks and mud.

Yamaha started the fashion in 1968 with their enormously successful 250cc twinshock DT-1. By the end of the '70s, it had evolved into the DT250MX, with motocross-inspired cantilever Monoshock rear suspension and styling – and acceptable on-road performance.

The cantilever rear suspension isn't a patch on later rising-rate systems, but temper your speed a little and the DT will cope with everything most riders will throw at it on the trail. If something does go badly wrong, it shouldn't cost a fortune to sort out, either. Piston kits and conrods are readily available and plenty of parts turn up on eBay.

What's the price difference?

For a machine in top condition, you're looking at forking out an extra £1500 for the Honda. Project bike prices are in the £1500-2000 region for both bikes, but any serious engine work will likely cost significantly more for the four-valve ohc four-stroke XL. For a tidy runner, budget around £2500-3000 for a Yamaha and about £4000 for an XL.

Buy now?

If you're a stroker fan and like the idea of a DT250MX, now's the time, with cracking bikes going for £3000 and £3500. That's good value for such a capable and fun classic.

Honda XL250 Motosport prices have probably peaked at around £5000 for a really good example. Some of the bikes at the top end of the price range have been on the market for a while, so maybe you can afford to wait for the right bike to turn up and haggle hard.

Which is the CB choice?

On the basis that most classic trail bikes of this era are going to be ridden more on the tarmac than the rough stuff, we go with the sophisticated and super-reliable XL250. It sounds good, looks great and makes a pretty useful backroads tool, with the ability to tackle a bit of not-too-serious greenlaning.

DEEP POCKETS 1972 Kawasaki 750 H2R

Unveiled in 1972, the H2R was Kawasaki's contender for the newly-created F750 racing class. Two years later, it was battling against Yamaha's TZ700 and Suzuki's TR750 at the Blue Riband event for F750 bikes – the Daytona 200.

This machine was there – it finished on the podium in third place behind Yamaha duo Giacomo Agostini and Kenny Roberts, due to a superb ride from Hurley Wilvert. Mechanic-turned-racer Wilvert joined Bob Hansen's Kawasaki team for 1972, spannering for Paul Smart on his new H2R. When Smart switched to Suzuki for 1973, Wilvert got a ride on the ex-Smart machine and put in some good rides. The next year, he was at Daytona on this bike.

In 1973, Gary Nixon had ridden the bike alongside British rider Cliff Carr, as part of an official Kawasaki satellite team, scoring three AMA championship wins on the bike. It's a real piece of road racing history.

It's currently up for sale at Lusso Veloce in Leicestershire, where owner Chris Mayhew is inviting offers around £200,000. "How often do you come across a bike that has been ridden by Gary Nixon and finished on the podium at Daytona alongside Agostini and Roberts?" he asks. "The frame is a one-off, built by team boss Randy Hall, who has written a book chronicling his racing days," Chris continues. "It has a full factory, wide transfer port engine and was restored a few years ago – with new, genuine factory, H2R pistons, by Nigel Everett and has been paraded at Goodwood by Scott Smart.

"There's a mass of documentation to back up the bike's history, with letters of provenance from Randy Hall, technical drawings and countless photographs - including one of the bike on the podium at Daytona signed by Agostini, Roberts and Wilvert. What more do you want?"
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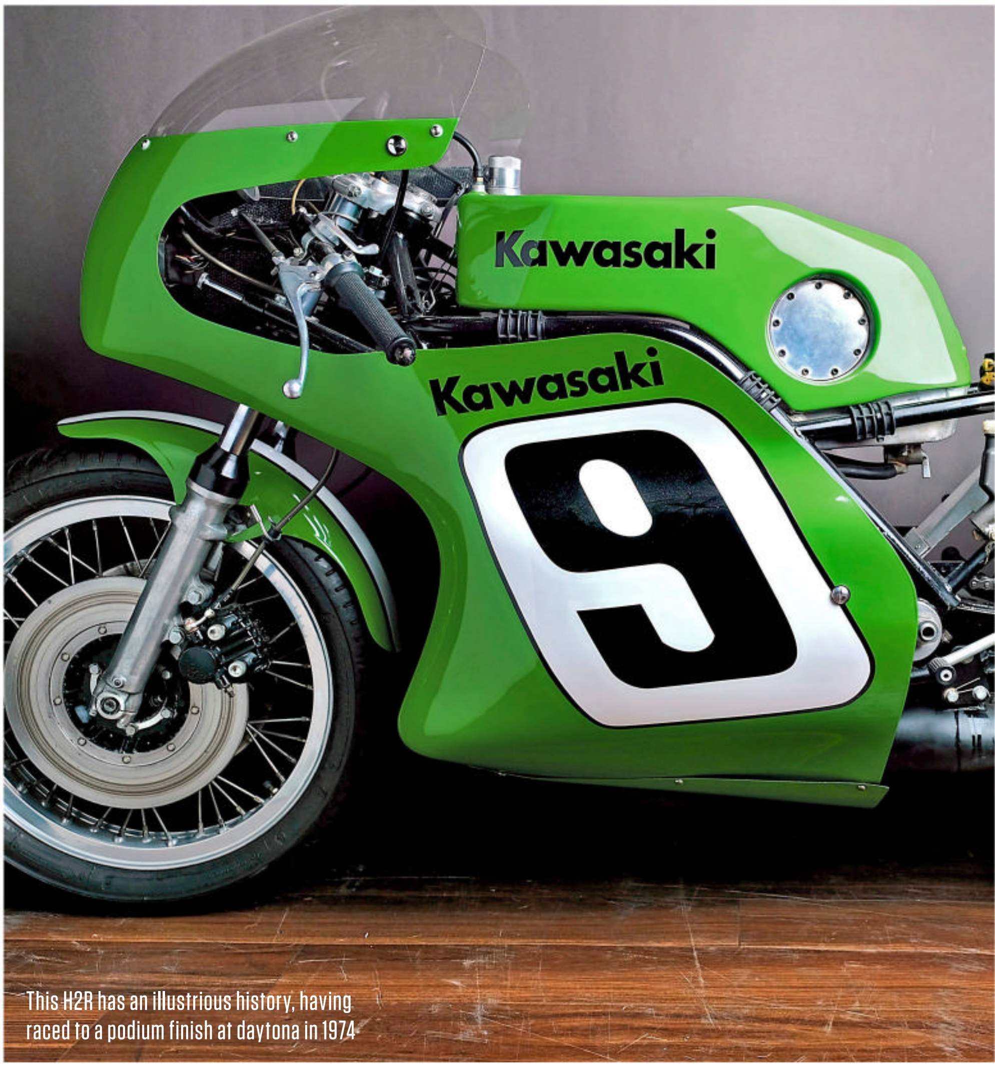

This H2R has an illustrious history, having raced to a podium finish at daytona in 1974

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CLASSIC SUPERBIKES

'Classic owners have to get their hands dirty'

I've been thinking about the differences between a classic bike and a new retro machine. I always try to give my customers good advice when they're looking to buy a bike – but some recent experiences have caused me to rethink what constitutes good advice on whether to buy an old (classic) or new (retro) bike to ride.

I've had a misty-eyed T120 buyer who was expecting a newly-restored bike to behave like a new machine and probably should have bought a Hinckley twin. An older gentleman, who was put off the new Gold Star over quality doubts, bought a lovely Tiger 100 but found it too hard to start and ride – then headed back to try the new Goldie anyway. And a classic Gold Star customer who went to the expense of fitting an electric starter and still doesn't use it, preferring his brand new CCM Spitfire so he can keep up with his mates on newer bikes. I also know a host of Japanese four owners who don't use them enough to keep the carbs clean.

A classic bike, no matter how recently rebuilt or restored, will need work. Maintenance and repairs are part of the deal, and unless you know an experienced mechanic you are going to have to get your head around diagnosing and fixing problems and getting your hands dirty. It can be hard and time-consuming work – and it's not everybody's cup of tea.

So how about a retro bike? It's a great idea, but what's on offer really isn't that compelling. There are some horrible Chinese offerings badged as old marques, some fine Japanese machines which get half way there with a paint job but fail to capture that classic simplicity and character. What's missing is a lightweight, well-built, simply-engineered old-style motorcycle which punches above its weight while offering reliability and affordability. Royal Enfield and Fantic are getting close with some of their models, so maybe there's light at the end of the tunnel.

The truth for many of us is that you still can't beat the real thing. My advice is to take the pain and enjoy the gain. I rode a 1970 ISDT Cheney Triumph 70 miles on a local classic ride-out last Bank Holiday and came back with an oily right leg and a big grin on my face! The really good news is that so many collections of pre-1970s classics are coming up for sale now and it's a buyers' market. Fill your boots.
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CHIPPY WOOD

1949-1966 | 347/498cc | 19/28bhp | 179/185kg | 70/80mph

Thumping good buys

AJS and Matchless heavyweight swingarm singles offer some of the best value in British bike ownership

WORDS: GEZ KANE

If you want an affordable, easy introduction to British biking, the AJS and Matchless heavyweight singles are a great option. Associated Motor Cycles (AMC) owned both marques and the bikes – the 347cc AJS Model 16 and Matchless G3, and 498cc AJS Model 18 and Matchless G80 – are almost identical. The first post-war models used the rigid frame of the wartime G3L from which they were derived. Swingarm models, introduced for 1949 and denoted by an 'S' suffix to the model number, brought the AJS and Matchless thumpers into the post-war age.

As long as any of the singles have been put together well and are set up right, starting won't be a drama. Forget all the horror stories you may have heard about firing up big singles. With a relatively soft compression ratio of 5.9:1 on early models and 7.3:1 from 1956 on the long stroke, road models will happily chuff into life without breaking your ankle.

Once you've lit the fires, settle back and enjoy the ride as the lovely, soft power of the 498cc engine wafts you along in supremely relaxing style. It's not surprising that AJS and Matchless singles proved very successful in trials. The engine will pull happily from just above tickover and there's no need for frantic gearchanging to maintain momentum – just as well if you're aboard a pre-57 model with the slow-changing Burman gearbox. Just get it into top and ride on the throttle.

A sturdy frame and competent cycle parts mean that the chassis isn't ever at risk of being overwhelmed by the engine, although the seven-inch brake does struggle to cope with the 400lb (181kg) weight.

Ridden solo, there's only a few mph difference in outright top speed between a 350 and a 500, though. A 500 will happily lope along at 60mph, whereas on a 350, 55mph is a more realistic cruising speed.

If you want more go, the Competition (CS) models have punchier performance. Higher compression and hot cams boost power, but rarity and desirability increase prices.

Whether you opt for the relatively cheap (though undeniably cheerful) 347cc AJS Model 16S or Matchles G3LS, or splash out on a 500, ownership of any of the heavyweight singles should be a relatively hassle-free experience. Reliability is generally good, if a bike has been well looked after, and parts availability (except perhaps for original tinware) is excellent. There's a thriving owners club, which operates its own spares scheme that commissions the re-manufacture of numerous parts, and there's plenty of specialist knowledge available to keep you on the road no matter what. They're fairly easy bikes to work on yourself, too. A heavyweight single is a bike you can buy with your head, while keeping your heart happy too.

THE BIG QUESTION...

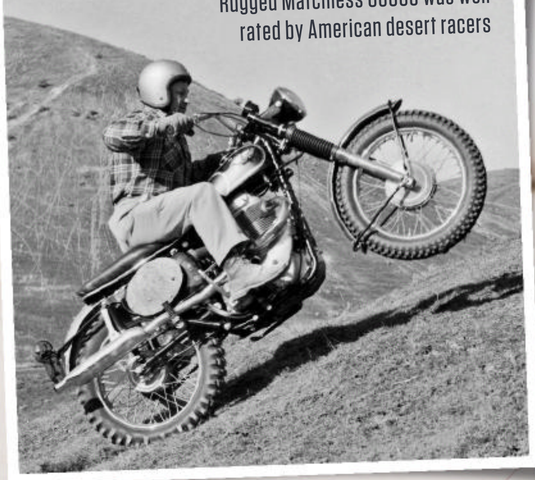
Is this the best all-round Brit single ever?

That's a big claim to make – and there's some stiff competition. BSA's Gold Star, Velocette's Venom and Norton's Featherbed-framed ES2, to name but three. But as an all-round package of performance, practicality, value and fun? We think AJS and Matchless heavyweight singles might just shade it.

Rod Baraona agrees. He's owned around 100 bikes in his time, including Goldies and Velos, and currently owns five AMC singles including an AJS Model 18 he's owned since he was 18. "They're hard to beat," he claims. "The AMC singles are the only British bikes I own now. I ride my bikes hard and they just soak it up. They are surprisingly quick, fairly reliable, well built and superb value.

"There are things you can do to improve them, of course. I prefer alternator models and run Boyer electronic ignitions. If you thrash them, the big ends can give up, so I replace them with Gold Star big ends when I rebuild an engine. You have to machine a taper into the flywheels, but they last for ages. I also replace the large drive-side ball main bearing with a roller bearing and shim the crank. I've been trail riding in southern France on my G80 trail bike with a bunch of lads on modern KTMs and they were amazed at how well my old Brit bike went.

"If you want a bit more power, you can hop up the 500s with CS parts, too. They're simple to work on. And the 350s just go on forever. The best all-round Brit singles? I think so."



Rugged Matchless G80CS was well rated by American desert racers

What to look for

ENGINE

Whether in 347cc or 498cc form, the AJS/Matchless engine is a solid and largely reliable unit. From 1948, both the 350 and 500 models have the same bottom end, meaning it's easy to convert a 350 into a 500 – but the crank will need to be re-balanced to take into account the heavier 500 piston. Excessive vibration is the giveaway that this has not been carried out. Listen for a knocking noise from the bottom end at tickover. It could mean either the transmission shock absorber drive splines on the mainshaft are worn, or there's wear in the big end. Either of these will mean a full engine strip.

GEARBOX

Check for positive engagement of gears and easy selection. Bear in mind than the Burman gearbox fitted up to 1956 demands an unhurried shift from the rider. Neither it, nor the AMC unit fitted from 1957 are generally troublesome.

IGNITION

Magneto ignition models carry the risk of an expensive mag rebuild. Check for easy starting when the engine is hot. The later 1958-on models have coil ignition, on which the auto advance unit needs lubricating regularly to prevent premature wear. Electronic ignition systems for both magneto and coil ignition models are available.

ELECTRICS

The location of the dynamo behind the engine on pre-'52 Matchless models, with the dynamo mounted on top of it, make it awkward to access for maintenance, so check the output. A 1958-on alternator model may prove easier to live with.

PRIMARY DRIVE COVER:

The pre-1958 pressed-steel primary drive cover is notorious for leaks, but effective seals are now available – and modern silicone-based sealants help, too. But if you demand a leak-free primary, you might be better off with a 1958-on model with a cast alloy primary case.

BRAKES

The seven-inch brakes are one of the few weak points of the heavyweight singles – even when perfectly set up. The Norton brakes fitted to the final 1964-66 models are a slight improvement, but a twin-leading-shoe drum from another machine (like an early Commando) is an even better option.

MAIN IMAGE: BONHAMS AUCTIONEERS

SPECIFICATIONS 1958 Matchless G3LS
(G80S where different)

ENGINE/TRANSMISSION	
Type	Air-cooled, ohv single
Dimensions	69 x 93mm (82.5 x 93mm)
Capacity	347cc (498cc)
Output	19bhp at 5750rpm (28bhp at 5600rpm)
Compression ratio	7.4:1 (7.3:1)
Fuel system	1 1/16in Amal Monobloc (1 5/32in)
Clutch	Multi-plate, wet
Gearbox	Four-speed
CHASSIS	
Frame	Tubular
Front suspension	Telescopic forks
Rear suspension	Twinshock
Brakes	7in (178mm) sls drum front, 7in (178mm) sls drum rear
Wheels	Spoked
Tyres	3.25 x 19in front, 3.25 x 19in rear (3.25 x 19in front, 3.50 x 19in rear)
DIMENSIONS	
Wheelbase	56.5in (1436mm),
Weight	395lb (179kg) (408/185kg)
PERFORMANCE	
Top speed	70mph (80mph)

RESOURCES

AMC Classic Spares
New genuine and pattern parts supplier.
amcclassicspares.com

JOHN WESTLAKE

Jampot Spares/Kettering Classics
The owners club's official spares scheme – only available to club members.
amoc-parts.com

The AJS and Matchless Owners Club
Vibrant International owners club, with branches all over the world. There's sure to be one near you.
jampot.com

Ken de Groome
One of the best known specialists in AJS and Matchless heavyweight singles. Engine rebuilds and repairs.
01945 870060 or 07800 809345.

Workshop 14
Engine and suspension rebuilds and repairs from long-time owners club member John Bolton.
07802 740672.

Kickstart Classic Motorcycles
Servicing repairs and rebuilds. AMC specialist. **01400 272853.**

TIMELINE

1949 Swingarm frame with 'Candlestick' rear suspension units offered as an option on 347cc and 497cc singles. Hairpin valve springs replace coil springs of earlier models.

1950 Redesigned mudguards, offset silencers and centrestand. Competition models get alloy barrel and head, Lucas Wader magneto and smaller fuel tank.

1951 'Jampot' rear suspension units appear. Roadsters get alloy head.

1952 Magneto moved to front of the engine on Matchless models. Burman B52 gearbox adopted. Positive earth electrics and an alloy front brake plate.

1953 Dual seat fitted to all swingarm bikes. Auto advance on 500s. Full-width alloy front hub, removable clutch cover and revised mudguards on road models.

1955 Auto advance adopted on 350s. New narrower front hub, full-width alloy rear hub, revised frame, silencer and larger diameter forks. Monobloc carburettors fitted on roadster models.

1956 New frame and swingarm. Oil tank on the right, toolbox on left. Trials models get a shorter-wheelbase frame. Scramblers get short-stroke all alloy engine with integral pushrod tunnels.

1957 AMC gearbox and Girling rear shock absorbers adopted across range.

1958 Alternator with coil ignition for road models. Alloy primary chain case.

1959: New mudguards on road bikes.

1960 Duplex frame, stepped seat and smaller headlamp shell on road bikes.

1961 Larger tank badges and shortened mudguards on road models.

1962 Short-stroke engine with integral pushrod tunnels is fitted to 350 models and a sports 350 introduced. Ignition lock provided. New centrestand.

1963 Revised front hub, oil tank, toolbox, silencer, fuel tank and seat. 18in wheels front and rear.

1964 Norton forks, hubs and oil pump fitted. All engines adopt 85.5mm stroke.

1964 Smaller tank badges.

1966 Final year of availability.

AJS or Matchless? It's all about your preference in tank badge design

CHIPPY WOOD

Which to buy, what to pay...

AJS OR MATCHLESS? Both marques are essentially the same machines with different paint and badges. Only the location of the magneto – in behind the engine on pre-1952 Matchless models, rather than behind the barrel as on their AJS counterparts – represents any other significant difference. So whether you buy an AJS or a Matchless is down to which marque your dad/grandad/uncle used to own, which badge you've already got on your jacket or which comes up for sale.

Whether you buy a 350 or a 500 is probably a more important decision. A 500 will offer increased performance that's especially useful if you carry a pillion, but it will also cost you significantly more; like 25-50%. That's partly down to the cachet of the extra performance, but it also reflects the supply situation. Many more 350s than 500s were produced and the relative scarcity of 498cc models has also contributed to their heftier price tags.

Aside from the sought-after competition models like the Matchless G80CS or AJS Model 18CS, you should be able to find a good 500 for £5000-6000. And 350s remain even more affordable with good, ready to ride examples selling in the £3000 to £4000 bracket.

In general, the later the model, the more refined and reliable it should be – as long as the engine has been put together well. From 1951, all the roadsters had alloy heads and the following year Matchless models' magnetos moved to the front of the engine. Go for a 1958-on model and you'll benefit from alternator electrics, coil ignition a beefed-up crankshaft with improved main bearings, higher compression and a slightly peppier cam. It's about as good as it gets for the heavyweight singles.

The post-1961 short-stroke 350s seem to be less sought-after than the traditional long-strokes, despite making a little more power. And, while the heavyweight singles remained in the catalogue until 1966, the 1964 models – both using the 85.5mm stroke engine (with a 72mm bore for 350s and 86mm for 500s) that had been fitted to the CS models since 1956 – represent the end of the line in terms of development.

So, later models look slightly better on paper, but you shouldn't be disappointed with any of them. Buy on condition and history and you shouldn't go wrong.

1955 Matchless 348cc G3LS

BONHAMS AUCTIONEERS

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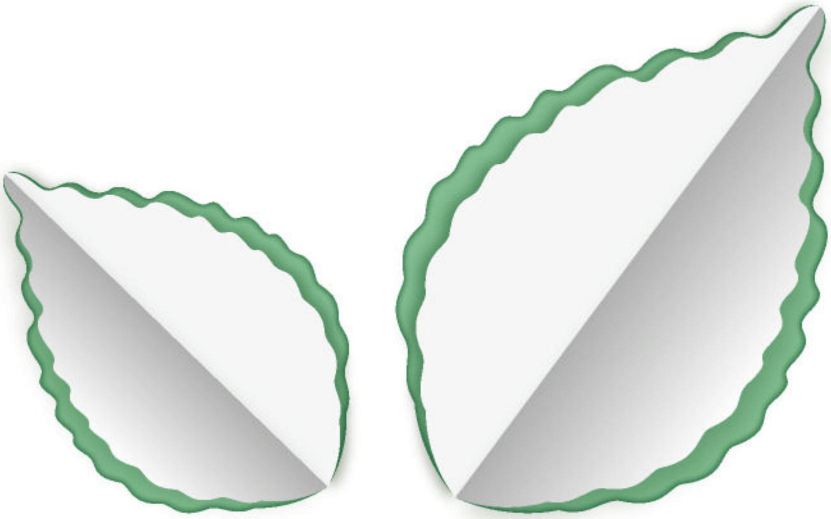

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Biddable Six up for auction in July

Half a dozen tasty-looking tempters from Silverstone, H&H, Spicers and Charterhouse

H&H AUCTIONS

£20,000 - 22,000

McIntyre Matchless G50

H&H sale, July 12

There are plenty of Matchless G50s around – but this is something a bit different, as the 500cc ohc single engine is housed in what's believed to be a Bob McIntyre frame. McIntyre, famous for achieving the first 100mph TT lap, developed the revised frame for his own AJS/Matchless race bikes in the early 1960s and then supplied a number of replicas of the frame. The vendor, who is also selling a Beale replica G50 and replica AJS 7R in the sale, bought this machine in dismantled state in the early '80s. He subsequently restored it – although it has never been raced.

handh.co.uk

£28,000-32,000

1971 BSA Vetter Rocket 3 X-75 prototype

H&H sale, July 12

Now here's something rare. One of only two prototypes of what became the Triumph X-75 Hurricane, is going under the hammer. Owned for the last 40 years by the late John Simmonds, the bike was built at Umberslade Hall in 1971. The other one, which was built by the bike's designer, Craig Vetter, is now housed in the AMA Hall of Fame in Pickerington, Ohio. Intended for release as a BSA – and badged as such – the closure of the BSA factory in late 1972 meant the bike was eventually marketed as the Triumph Hurricane. This machine is where the story began.

handh.co.uk

£5000-8000

1971 Honda CB500 KO

H&H sale, July 12

Honda's CB750 has carved its own niche in the classic motorcycle world, but many in the know feel its smaller sibling, the CB500, is just as rewarding to ride. Launched two years after the 750 in 1971, it's lighter, more nimble – and not much slower. This one looks worth checking out.

Completely restored by the vendor – a retired engineer with countless restos under his belt – the US-market bike arrived in the UK in 2019. The engine has been stripped for inspection and the top end rebuilt, the frame and swingarm have been powder coated, the carburettors rebuilt and genuine NOS exhausts, tank and side panels (repainted) fitted. It's stunning.

handh.co.uk

CHARTERHOUSE

£15,000-18,000

1959 Norton Manx Lowboy special

Charterhouse Auctions sale, June 29

Sure to generate huge interest at Charterhouse's sale at the end of June are some of the Nortons owned by the late Dr George 'Norton George' Cohen. George sadly passed away in 2016 and a house move means the family need to thin out his collection. Consigned to the sale are a 1907 Norton Model T12, a replica of Rem Fowler's 1907 TT-winning machine (est £15,000-18,000), a 1934 Norton International Model 30, restored by George in 2012/13 (est £10,000-12,000) and this 1959 sohc Lowboy Norton Manx special he built in 2015 and rode at Goodwood and in the Isle of Man (est. £15,000-18,000).

charterhouse-bikes.com

SPICERS

£6000-7000

1950 Sunbeam S7

Spicers Auctioneers sale, July 8

Sometimes, it's easy to forget what an advanced machine Sunbeam's S7 was when launched in 1946. Just take a look at the specification of its tandem-twin engine. All-alloy construction, sohc, shaft drive and – wonder of wonders for a British manufacturer – horizontally-split crankcases. But between 1946 and 1956, when production halted, only 7568 S7s were built, although the sportier S8 version did run alongside it from 1948. This bike has benefitted from an engine rebuild in 1995, and a rebuild of the worm drive using improved parts from S7 specialists Stewart Engineering the following year. It's described a well sorted and usable machine.

spicersauctioneers.com

£12,000-14,000

1917 Cleveland A2 dispatch bike

Silverstone Auctions sale, July 30

The Ohio-based Cleveland Motorcycle Manufacturing Company produced motorcycles between 1915-29. By 1917, when the USA joined WWI,their A2 model was selected by the US military for use by dispatch riders. Light, simple and reliable, it proved ideal for the job. This one surfaced in France, having been left there after the war, and was restored and registered there. Following the death of the original owner and his son, a family member took it to the Netherlands. Described as in running order, it has its original French registration documents and Dutch import papers, and is up for sale at Silverstone's Shuttleworth Collection sale in July

silverstoneauctions.com

Finishing on a high

Silverstone Auctions' sale at the *MCN* Festival signed off in style before moving to a new venue next year. **Gez Kane** highlights half a dozen standout buys that we wish we'd had the money to take a bid on...

SILVERSTONE AUCTIONS

£2475

1973 Honda C70 Cub

There's a growing cult following for Honda Cubs – and the price realised by this earlier restoration from the Dennis Bagshaw collection is vivid evidence of that. A few years ago, Honda Cubs could be picked up for pennies, almost literally – but not any more.

There's no denying the classic credentials of the Honda Cub. With more than 100 million (of all variants) being sold since 1958, it's the best-selling motorcycle ever produced. Despite not having been used for some time and requiring recommissioning before being returned to the road, this tidy little 72cc model – which, like all the bikes from the collection, was offered without reserve – sold easily.

£3600

circa 1955 Rotrax JAP speedway bike

Rotrax are an integral part of speedway history. The Southampton-based outfit started producing speedway frames in 1952, beautifully crafted using Reynolds 531 chrome-moly tubing, and their products were reckoned to be right up with the best in their league.

This very original bike is a typical example of the 16 speedway and grass trackers machines from the Dennis Bagshaw collection. It features a five-stud long-stroke 500cc JAP engine and is a fine example of a competitive bike from what many regard as the golden age of speedway. An older restoration – or possibly original – it would require recommissioning before any potential return to the shale oval.

£7200

1957 BSA DBD32 Gold Star

Despite the fact that this very presentable Goldie left Armoury Road with a 500cc engine, rather than the 350cc unit currently fitted, a Gold Star for £7200 sounds like a very good deal. The bike is an older restoration – but following a major engine failure, the short-stroke Phil Pearson-built unit currently fitted was installed. Now the bike looks ready for many more miles without further major work.

There's an accompanying file detailing the engine rebuild – including a full data sheet for the new owner and many photographs. Having been stored unused for a few years, the bike will need thoroughly checking over before use

£10,708

1929 James B3 SV Sports Standard

Probably the pick of the sale for vintage enthusiasts, this James is a relatively rare machine – the 500cc side-valve models were only produced between 1929 and 1931. It was bought by the vendor in 2020 and restored to a very high standard during the Covid lockdown. The bike is also accompanied by an extensive history file, receipts relating to the restoration, a parts book and what appears to be an original sales brochure.

Originally marketed as a fast touring machine, the newly restored 500cc side-valve V-twin would make an ideal mount for any vintage run. It is, of course, Banbury Run-eligible – and with its three-speed gearbox it should make light work of Sunrising Hill.

£3825

1960 BSA A7 Shooting Star

Anyone looking for a nicely turned-out British parallel twin would have been tempted by this very tidy machine. With just four owners recorded from new, it was bought by the vendor from respected Lancashire restorer and dealer Mark Garside in 2015, since when it has been in regular use. Before that, the bike had been with its previous owner since 1995.

Not concours, but in lovely condition and regularly serviced, the bike was described as running and riding beautifully. It's to be hoped the new owner will make the most of it.

£6750

1968 Triumph Thruxton Bonneville replica

It might not be the real thing, but this homage to the limited-edition 1965 production racers certainly looks like a lot of fun for a fraction of the price a genuine Thruxton might command. Restored by a marque specialist and supplied to the vendor by respected Thruxton guru George Hopwood in 2003, this is a very well-specified and meticulously put-together machine.

The engine has been rebuilt with 9:1 compression ratio pistons, E3134 cams, R tappets, a seven-plate clutch, close-ratio gearbox and Boyer electronic ignition. Alloy flangeless rims, an alloy five-gallon tannk and replica fairing and seat unit complete an exacting specification.
silverstoneauctions.com

REVIEW
Silverstone Auctions
Devitt *MCN* Festival of
Motorcycling Sale
14th May

SOLD FOR

£8438

1990 Honda NSR250 SP MC21

One of the best and most sought-after of what would be the penultimate generation of supersports 250cc two-strokes from Honda, this machine was imported to the UK in 2012, since when it has had two owners. The compact and lightweight V-twin boasted 45bhp and a dry weight of just 133kg, making it one of the most potent packages in a very competitive 250 race-rep market in Japan in the early '90s. This example has had an engine rebuild and was sold ready to ride with its original screen, pillion seat cover, tool kit and a selection of spare parts.

Auction dates

June 29
Charterhouse sale at the Haynes Motor Museum, Sparkford, Somerset
charterhouse-bikes.com

June 30
HJ Pugh sale at Hazle Meadow Auction Centre, Ledbury, Herefordshire
hjpugh.com

July 1
Richard Edmonds sale
at Showell Farm, Chippenham, Wiltshire
richardedmondsauctions.com

July 8
Spicers sale at The Waterways Saleroom, Old Goole, East Yorkshire
spicersauctioneers.com

July 12
H&H sale at The National Motorcycle Museum, Solihull
handh.co.uk

July 21/22
Cheffins Vintage sale at the Machinery Saleground, Sutton, Ely, Cambridgeshire
cheffins.co.uk

AUCTION EXPERT

MARK BRYAN

SILVERSTONE AUCTIONS

'At the MCN *Festival* sale, I even bought a bike myself'

Competition bikes are a slightly unpredictable category of machine for auctioneers. Road racing machines with an association with a famous rider almost always do well – and tidy trials or scrambles bikes that can be used in classic competition are fairly easy to sell, too. But the in-between machines, without a glamorous back story, can be a little more tricky. So offering a collection of 16 grasstrack and speedway bikes, as we did at our sale at the *MCN* Festival of Motorcyling at Peterborough on May 13/14 might have seemed a bold move.

In fact, we were delighted with how the Dennis Bagshaw collection fared. It helped that the bikes were all being offered without reserve, but the fact that they were all in delightful 'barn find' condition seemed to generate more interest. A restored circa 1952 500cc Rotrax JAP speedway machine proved the top seller, making £5963, but all of the collection did well. There were also some affordable buys. How about a circa 1976 Barber JAP grasstracker with Norton two-speed gearbox for a bit of classic racing action, for example?

I even bought a bike from the sale myself. Not a speedway bike, but a 2002 Harley-Davidson XL883R. Another bike in barn-find condition and a little scruffy round the edges, I reckon it'll be good fun to just tidy it up a bit and blast about on it this summer.

It's been a busy couple of months for us, with preparations for the Shuttleworth Collection sale at the end of July coming straight after the Peterborough sale. And we spent an interesting weekend at the Bike Shed Show at Tobacco Dock on May 27/28. I'd never been before and I was in two minds about the idea of using what may be a classic bike as the basis of a custom machine. But, by the end of the weekend, I was starting to be won over. There was some superb engineering and stunning bikes on display. The show was very well organised and attracted a lot of younger people. That has to be good for the motorcycle movement as a whole. And I managed to come away without a tattoo.

Now it's on to the Shuttleworth sale. It's a great venue and is home to the world famous Shuttleworth Collection of motorcycles, cars and aircraft. The sale is to be held in two of the hangars either side of the cafe – ideal! We're expecting around 150 bikes in the catalogue and we hope the Shuttleworth sale will become a regular fixture on out calendar. See you there.
silverstoneauctions.com

BIKES LINED UP FOR THE SHUTTLEWORTH COLLECTION SALE

1987 Suzuki RG500 Gamma
Estimate £15,000-17,000
This restored machine is ready to ride, having had a full engine rebuild in 2016.

1963 Triumph TR6SS Trophy
Estimate £12,000-14,000
Beautifully restored matching-numbers bike in excellent running order.

1970 Honda CB750K1
Estimate £7000-9000
A more affordable alternative to a K0 model. Restored in 2013, but in need of recommissioning.

SILVERSTONE AUCTIONS

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ARIEL HUNTMASTER
1956, 0 miles, 650cc, owned since 1976, older restoration, VGC, starts and runs well, some engine and gearbox spares, please call., GBP, 4750Kent, tel: 07907474167

ARIEL HUNTMASTER
1958, 51000 miles, Presented in concourse condition following extensive restoration, old buff log book and V5c, much stainless, enclosed rear chain case, 12v electrics with indicators. Useful carrying rack., GBP, 6500North Yorkshire, tel:01723372219

ARIEL LEADER
1962, 0 miles, Ivory/Black restored , full set extras, new tyres, 12v, electronic ignition, running, useful spares and workshop tools included, taxed, service advised, stored., GBP, 3250West Midlands, tel:07824647202

ARIEL LEADER
1964, 0 miles, Older restoration in superb order, manuals, handbook and quality cover, always garaged and meticulously maintained, you won't find a better one., GBP, 2750Norfolk, tel:07980499108

BMW K100
1987, 0 miles, Runs well, good condition for year/mileage, complete with city and touring panniers/top box, extensive service history, project, needs recommissioning, please call., GBP, 1300Surrey, tel:01737357822

BMW R80
1979, 53053 miles, Reliable matching numbers airhead with invoices and MoT certificates, good condition, Krauser panniers, tested to April 2024., GBP, 3750Surrey, tel:07940319166

BRIDGESTONE 175
1969, 2000 miles, Gorgeous, I've owned and used since buying 6 years ago with less than 1k miles, mainly original with some new chrome, comes with original fuel tank and Bridgestone tyres (new ones fitted)., GBP, 4995Merseyside, tel:07771606038

BSA 650
1969, 0 miles, With matching numbers, has done 9,500 miles since a full engine rebuild by SRM and new stainless rims and tyres., GBP, 7000Uk, tel: 01766770648

BSA A10
1952, 0 miles, Golden Flash 650, totally rebuilt with all bearings and bushes etc replaced, excellent runner, good oil return, make a good daily ride., GBP, 5000Norfolk, tel:07551336877

BSA A65
1969, 8300 miles, Restored - looks & sounds beautiful. Matching frame & engine numbers. Tax & mot exempt with v5. Includes a Hunter armored jacket - medium. Many spares. Open to sensible offers. , GBP, 6700Hastings East Sussex, tel:07932723682

BSA A65
1969, 0 miles, Restored, looks and sounds beautiful, matching numbers, tax and MoT exempt with V5, loads of spares., GBP, 6600East Sussex, tel: 07932723682

BSA A65
1964, 0 miles, Recent overhaul, many new parts including exhausts and battery, alloy wheel rims, good running order, please call., GBP, 4950Somerset, tel:07967856206

BSA A65
1969, 8300 miles, Restored - looks & sounds beautiful. Matching frame & engine numbers with V5. Tax & MOT exempt. Includes Hunter armored jacket - medium. Many spares. Open to sensible offers. 07932723682 Hastings., GBP, 6700Hastings, tel: 07932723682

BSA A65
1971, 35000 miles, Oil in frame model, matching numbers, rebuilt engine, recent MoT, new Avon tyres, later Bonneville tank and panels, owned for the past 11 years and built to be ridden., GBP, 5500Bucks, tel:07849382910

BSA A7
1960, 0 miles, Custom, professional build, Kawasaki forks, Triumph brakes, Redwing shocks, powder coated frame, rebuilt oil-tight engine, runs, rides, handles beautifully, immaculate, ONO., GBP, 7850Lancashire, tel: 07518377800

BSA B33
1954, 0 miles, Recent full restoration, new Pearson starter and Mikoni carb, all chrome and alloy very good, please call., GBP, 9500North Yorkshire, tel: 07713200874

BSA BANTAM
1965, 0 miles, BSA Bantam Trials Villiers, 4 speed, alloy wheels, Electric World ignition., GBP, 2700Bridlington, tel: 07816561852

BSA BANTAM
1964, 0 miles, BSA Bantam Trials 185CC conversion, Electric World ignition, nice front forks, alloy wheels. , GBP, 2600Bridlington, tel:07816561852

BSA BANTAM
1962, 0 miles, D1 125cc in trials trim, professional engine rebuild in 2013, rooster booster ignition., GBP, 1995Cumbria, tel: 07881385129

BSA DBD 34
1957, 0 miles, Built by GS specialist, ally, rims, St spokes, fasteners, 12V electronic ignition, many new parts, please call., GBP, 11500Bucks, tel: 01494868218

BSA FIREBIRD
1969, 0 miles, Beautifully restored, with V5, tax & MoT exempt, matching numbers, with many new parts, spares & manuals., GBP, 6900East Sussex, tel:07932723682

BSA GOLDSTAR
1971, 3075 miles, Dispatched to USA, repatriated and restored in 2011, mileage reads 3075, running standard piston, history available since restoration, on SORN, not run for the past 18 months, £5500., GBP, 5500Kent, tel:07957677428

BSA GOLDSTAR
1959, 0 miles, DB 32 Cubmans GP carb, RRT2 box, SRM clutch, 12 volt, 1350 miles since rebuild, std bore/piston, 2 owners, pristine inside and out., GBP, 11500Hampshire, tel: 07881910049

BSA SUPER ROCKET
1959, 0 miles, With 3 owners, correct numbers and original log book, fully rebuilt, price ono, possible part exchange for Volvo XC 70 Estate, for more details please phone. , GBP, 8900Derbyshire, tel:07961193069

DOUGLAS MARK V
1950, 20000 miles, 90 plus in racing trim, really nice, with a racing magneto, alloy wheels and new tyres, complete road-going equipment with the bike which has all been professionally resprayed to a high standard., GBP, 11500Cambridge, tel:01223832551

DUCATI 250
1972, 0 miles, Excellent condition, please call., GBP, 8000Ipswich, tel:01473424288

FRANCIS-BARNETT PLOVER
1957, 0 miles, Original 150 Villiers engine, good condition, new tyres and seat, please call., GBP, 1900Lowestoft, tel: 01502567887

GREEVES HAWKSTONE
1960, 0 miles, I have 3 Greeves for sale, 1 complete with Triumph engine the other 2 have different engines and tanks to make into your choice, please ring me for details., GBP, 0Bridlington, tel:07816561852

GREEVES TRIALS
1963, 0 miles, Excellent, very original, challenger head & barrel, alloy tank & hubs, V5C, owned 37 years., GBP, 0Nottinghamshire, tel: 07852520802

HONDA 250
1981, 36646 miles, Extensive paperwork, age related marks, minor dent to tank, overall condition good, ONO., GBP, 1780Leyland, tel:07986284445

HONDA 350
1972, 0 miles, CRMC certified race/parade, high level of detail and finish, one off new parts, CR carbs, lockheed brakes, race exhaust., GBP, 7950North Yorkshire, tel:07792517466

HONDA 400/4
1977, 28616 miles, Excellent condition overall, close to original, top end engine overhaul, complete carb ultrasonic clean, new needles, rebuild and balance, good tyres, paint and chrome work., GBP, 5450West Sussex, tel: 07887484039

HONDA CB175
1973, 0 miles, Metallic Blue, good condition, owned since 1985, tax and MoT exempt, please call., GBP, 2750Scotland, tel: 07856676360

HONDA CB200
1977, 0 miles, Nut and bolt restoration in 2015 garaged and well maintained since, 17869 miles, ready to ride. , GBP, 3900Birmingham, tel: 07772151668

HONDA CB250
1973, 4078 miles, Strong engine, very good condition, original handle bars supplied, runs well, new battery., GBP, 2675Lancs, tel:07986284445

HONDA CB400
1977, 0 miles, Tyres, electrics, reconditioned carbs, alloy rims with SS spokes, spares 3000 miles, please call., GBP, 3995Uk, tel:07391901041

HONDA CB750
1976, 32000 miles, Great condition but needs servicing, good chrome and paintwork, Marzocci shocks, health forces sale., GBP, 5500West Sussex , tel: 01243378454

HONDA CBR600
1994, 54000 miles, Lots of money spent on service items, stainless steel exhaust system, new front tyre, un-used for a few years, a great bike for the price, full tool kit, MoT expired, needs TLC, garaged., GBP, 1100Watford, tel: 01923679950

HONDA CBX1000
1979, 0 miles, VGC, in good patina, South African import, the same as UK except km clock, has a convertor to make it read in miles, runs lovely, full engine and carb refresh not many ago, to much to list in ad., GBP, 11000Uk, tel: 07982247096

HONDA CL360
1975, 6100 miles, USA import, new tyres, professional seat rebuild, all services receipt, very original, immaculate, lovely to ride, please call., GBP, 3900Kent, tel:07588559961

HONDA MR175
1976, 0 miles, Nicely restored example with low miles since rebuild, runs crisp with CR125 ignition, many new parts, including NOS speedo, please call., GBP, 0Wantage, tel:07792094969

HONDA XBR 500
1987, 0 miles, Registered September 1987, H model, eye catching Cafe Noir limited edition in Black, this model is named by MCN in their 7 brilliant singles, VGC, MoT is valid until 29/03/2., GBP, 2995Uk, tel:07974921077

HONDA XL250
1972, 0 miles, Genuine UK bike with Honda UK dating letter, lots of history, stainless fasteners throughout, viewing welcome, more details., GBP, 0West Yorkshire, tel:07970484660

HONDA XL250
1972, 0 miles, Tastefully rebuilt with new OE parts, spares, powder coated frame, new paint, retains original patina, rides beautifully, low miles, ONO., GBP, 4995Manchester, tel:07518377800

KAWASAKI KZ650B 1979
1979, 0 miles, This US delivered 650 is in lovely highly original condition, original exhausts and shocks in very good condition, comes fully serviced with an MoT and a three month warranty, GBP 7000Kent: Tel: 01959 444441

LAVERDA 3C
1973, 24000 miles, Early version with later wheels, brakes, Jota bars and paint, in very good condition, ready to ride, sounds awesome. , GBP, 10000Devon , tel:07543697587

LAVERDA RGS
1983, 0 miles, Matching numbers, Ikon suspension, Moto Witt ignition, new tyres, battery, wheel bearings ,F&R discs/pads, cush drive rubbers, owned by Laverda specialist., GBP, 0Leciestershire, tel:07910838217

MATCHLESS G2
1961, 0 miles, Starts and runs well, good clean condition, £1,482 spent on it with Bygone Bikes classic motorcycle restoration in 2021., GBP, 2500Surrey, tel:07967748207

MATCHLESS G3L
1947, 0 miles, Green lane, road use, V5C, complete engine and frame rebuild, new big end, Magneto wheels, brakes, paintwork, cables, all receipts, no work needed, ride away., GBP, 3000Nottinghamshire, tel: 07850863374

MATCHLESS G3L
1948, 0 miles, Not an ex-wd, original unrestored, recent battery., GBP, 4250Exeter, tel: 07729422940

MATCHLESS G80S
1955, 0 miles, Original good paintwork, good tyres, luggage rack, leg guards, digital regulator, gel battery, new Lucas SR Magneto winding and wiring loom, new spare tyre and leather panniers included., GBP, 5500Uk, tel: 01303264972

MOTO GUZZI V50
1985, 24750 miles, Moto Guzzi V50 Imola II, B-reg, Mini Le Mans, was V35 retro fitted with stronger V50 PB/ 1978ish two valve motor, soon be "historic", MoT, no advisories., GBP, 1995West Norfolk, tel:07704826401

MOTO MORINI 175
1962, 0 miles, Very pretty, goes like stink, handles beautifully and stops on a sixpence. Much spent, new generator, electronic ignition., GBP, 4900Uk, tel: 07305884352

MOTO MORINI 250
1983, 0 miles, Red and Black paintwork, alloy wheels, Avons, front disc rear drum brakes, stainless silencers, previous MoTs, V5c, ready to ride, stunning bike., GBP, 4450Scarborough, tel:01723372219

MOTO MORINI 50
1980, 0 miles, 2 Mini Moto's, been in shed a while, 1 was running with spares. , GBP, 150Bridlington , tel:07816561852

MOTO MORINI STRADA
1976, 25000 miles, Fitted with 500 engine, 25000 miles, totally required, saschse ignition, stainless exhaust, top end overhaul, owned 30 years, spares and fresh MoT available., GBP, 4750Oxford, tel:07792425917

MV AGUSTA 125
1957, 0 miles, Fully restored, excellent condition, garage stored on SORN, logbook in my name, please call. , GBP, 3000Leicestershire, tel: 079384557810

MV AGUSTA AB AMERICA
1958, 0 miles, Trophy winner, as featured in Classic Bike, restored and owned 15 years, power dynamo electrics, much admired, please call., GBP, 5450Sussex, tel: 07793107877

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Suzuki GT750J	Full resto, rebuild stunning blue	72	£16,000
Suzuki GT750J	Full Resto, Allspeeds, burgundy	72	£14,250
Suzuki GT750J	Restored, ex condition, burgundy	72	£14,000
Suzuki GT750K	Full Resto, Higgspeeds, blue	73	£14,000
Yamaha RD350LC	Rebuilt UK bike 4L0 Matching Nos.	82	£13,000
Kawasaki ZX750 Turbo	Restored UK bike	85	£12,950
Suzuki GS1000ET	UK bike superb low miles	80	£9,000
Suzuki AP50	UK bike Mint	76	£7,950
Kawasaki KZ650B	Superb original bike low miles	79	£7,000
Yamaha RB-5	Lovely original low miles purple	71	£6,750
Suzuki X5	Full Resto, UK bike, yellow	79	£6,750

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BSA A65 1965 Tidy original bike ready to ride....................£4850
BSA A10 1960 ....£5495
BSA BANTAM D7 1961 Very nice example in red £2495
BSA C11G 1955 Tidy light weight....................£3495
BSA ROCKET 3 MK2 1971 Superb US spec bike ...£11,995
EXCELSIOR AUTOBYKE 1939 98CC, early autocycle in nice original condition....................£2395
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NORMAN B3 197CC 1957....................£3250
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ROYAL ENFIELD 350 BULLET 2007 Nice Indian built bike, only....................£2395
ROYAL ENFIELD 350 OHV twin port, model COL, 1930 Excellent condition....................£6995
ROYAL ENFIELD 1994 500CC BOBBER HARD TAIL, 535cc big bore kit, close ratio gearbox etc, lots of money spent ....**CALL FOR DETAILS**
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TRIUMPH T150V TRIDENT 1973 Absolutely superb £7995
TRIUMPH THUNDERBIRD 1961 BATHTUB lovely original bike £6950
TROJAN MINIMOTOR on Gents Raleigh bicycle, rebuilt engine £1295
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Norton 961 Commando 2021....................£13,995

Norton N15CS 750cc 1968 ....£8895

Norton N15CS 750cc 1965 ....£9385

Rickman Metisse T120 1972 ....£15,888

Suzuki GT750K 1973 ....£10,495

Triton 750cc Morgo Re-Unit £13,995

Triumph T160 Trident 750cc 1975....................£12,995

Triumph T120 Bonneville 1968....................£9,385

Triumph 6T Thunderbird Rep 1952....................£13,500

Triumph TR6R 650cc 1970 ....£7795

Triumph T120 650cc 1960 Mint....................£12,995

Triumph T120C TT Special Knievel £14,999

Triumph T110 650cc 1959 Matching....................£8999

Triumph 6T Thunderbird 650cc....................£11,395

Triumph Tangerine Dream 1958....................£20,995

Triumph Cafe Racer 750cc 1975....................£12,995

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Triumph T100C 500cc 1953 ....£17,500

Triumph T100 500cc 1948 ....£12,995

Velocette Venom Thruxton Rep....................£10,500

NORTON 750
1971, 57435 miles, Interstate, 57,435 miles, matching numbers, single carb, electronic ignition, oil and fuel has been drained and the battery removed for storage., GBP, 7000West Yorkshire, tel:07505914116

NORTON DOMINATOR
1961, 32000 miles, Original, matching numbers, excellent condition, alloy rims, Black and Silver, 32,000 miles., GBP, 7000Cumbria, tel:01697361337

ROYAL ENFIELD CRUSADER
1959, 0 miles, 1959 model, beautifully restored in show condition, exhibited at the Bristol Classic Bike Show in 2022, full documented history with original log book and number., GBP, 3850Somerset, tel:01458851411

SUZUKI T350
1970, 0 miles, Period Cafe racer with all original parts included, original exhausts, seat, wheels etc, stored in collection, no V5, engine has very good compression and spark, everything works., GBP, 2950East Sussex, tel: 07842180968

TRIUMPH BONNEVILLE
1975, 0 miles, Excellent condition, restored, matching no, new powder coating, stainless etc, electronic ignition, 5 speed, starts first time and runs great., GBP, 5850Fife, tel:07543671332

NORTON ATLAS
1965, 4234 miles, Matching numbers, unrestored, 4,234 miles on speedo. Oil and Fuel has been drained and the battery removed for storage., GBP, 5000Bradford, tel:07505914116

NORTON MODEL 50
1961, 29822 miles, Completely restored, rewired 12v, electronic ignition, matching numbers, in excellent condition, owned since 1972., GBP, 6600Dorset, tel: 07815082043

ROYAL ENFIELD CRUSADER
1959, 0 miles, Runs well, light, easy to handle, easy kickstart, good presentable bike, but not concourse, REOC dating certificate shows frame and engine numbers as factory., GBP, 2500Yorkshire, tel:07508558540

SUZUKI T350
1972, 0 miles, Nice original condition, complete, stored in collection, No V5C, engine has good spark & compression, original exhausts, extra parts include good tank & extra engine., GBP, 2950East Sussex, tel:07842180968

TRIUMPH BONNEVILLE
1966, 2731 miles, 2731 miles since full renovation in 2011 by Gatfield classics, very good condition, used regularly, best in show at Amlwch classic car and bike show 2018, matching numbers, £8000 ONO, please call., GBP, 8000Anglesey, tel:01407830194

NORTON COMMANDO
1973, 0 miles, Many new parts, some history and a UK bike, runs and rides great, starts first kick from cold, new Mikuni conversion, tank, seat and panels., GBP, 6750Uk, tel: 07976881263

NSU QUICKLY
1957, 0 miles, Matching numbers, original registration and patina, dry stored since 1965, looked after, new chain, tyres and exhaust, running video., GBP, 1100Wirral, tel:07730928081

RUDGE ULSTER
1937, 0 miles, Restoration project, first registered 04/05/1937, engine number U2982 and frame 60467, first to see will buy., GBP, 9750Uk, tel: 07519386035

TRITON 750
1960, 1100 miles, Built from scratch by Dave Degans at Dresda Autos, call for more information., GBP, 14500Norfolk, tel:07799957700

TRIUMPH BONNEVILLE
1975, 0 miles, Owned 20 years, very reliable, stainless fittings, new silencers, spares include original side panels, primary cover, uprated springs., GBP, 5750Surbiton, tel:07836618809

NORTON COMMANDO
1968, 0 miles, Matching numbers, restored, done 300 miles since, Boyer ignition, solid state regulator, stainless rear rim and spokes and mudguard., GBP, 7200South Lincs, tel:07749202932

PANTHER MODEL 100
1953, 0 miles, 600cc with twin port cylinder head, 1953 engine in springer frame, oil and fuel has been drained and the battery removed for storage., GBP, 5000Bradford, tel:07505914116

SUZUKI GSX1400 K2
2002, 0 miles, a lovely condition low mileage 17900 mile example of Suzukis ultimate muscle bike, MoT until May 2024, runs and rides perfectly, comes with 3 month warranty., GBP 7500Kent Tel: 01959 444441

TRIUMPH BONNEVILLE
1974, 12580 miles, Matching numbers, restored to very good standard and running very well, got very good power, 5 former keepers, my bike for 4 years, good bit of history with receipts and bills for restoring., GBP, 6950Scotland, tel:07774233519

TRIUMPH BONNEVILLE
1974, 0 miles, Matching engine & frame numbers, MoT & tax exempt, good condition, runs well, £5,000, more details call., GBP, 5000Leicester, tel: 07980123889

NORTON COMMANDO
1973, 0 miles, Fitted with Alton electric start, single carb conversion, new seat, tank and panels. Unfinished restoration, starts and rides perfectly, some spares and history., GBP, 8500Uk, tel:07976881263

ROYAL ENFIELD BULLET
1976, 25 miles, Royal Enfield 350 1976 bullet with single seater sidecar, MOT July 23 even though it's tax mot exempt, bike and sidecar in great condition, a chance to enjoy classic motorcycling with the family., GBP, 4750Cleveland, tel:01429422235

SUZUKI GT 750
1975, 0 miles, Show standard, professional restoration, full engine rebuild, many new OE parts, runs & rides beautifully, immaculate example, ONO., GBP, 11750Lancshire, tel:07518377800

TRIUMPH BONNEVILLE
1976, 0 miles, 750cc, 5 gear, slim line tank, kick start, wire wheels, disc brakes, stainless steel brake master cylinder, new battery, centre stand and side stand, cone exhausts, mileage 19208., GBP, 6100Uk, tel:07802797427

TRIUMPH BONNEVILLE
1966, 0 miles, Genuine matching numbers, comprehensive restoration to the original factory specification, American certificate of title, TMOC letter, genuine TT/V5C log book, electronic ignition, bell mouths., GBP, 15750Devon, tel:07917641642

NORTON COMMANDO
1972, 0 miles, Matching numbers, Norvil fourteen" front disc, Lockheed calliper, alloy rims, stainless spokes, stainless silencers, stainless fasteners throughout, V5C in my name, MoT certificates and tax discs., GBP, 9500Cornwall, tel:0172672273

ROYAL ENFIELD CONSTELLATION
1959, 0 miles, 700cc, fully restored engine, original seat in very good condition, excellent chrome, runs and starts well, please call., GBP, 4995Surrey, tel:07860201365

SUZUKI GT125
1978, 2036 miles, Three owners from new, original paint, seat, fasteners etc, lovely condition, runs perfectly, please call., GBP, 4500Devon, tel:07713929780

TRIUMPH BONNEVILLE
1967, 0 miles, 650cc, superb restored condition, many new parts, matching numbers, history, reluctant sale, rides well., GBP, 10000Hampshire, tel: 07803975452

TRIUMPH DAYTONA
1996, 0 miles, Nice original bike, owned by me since 1996, always garaged, selling with non carbon silencers fitted and the original carbon silencers. Original handlebars also included., GBP, 5500Bristol, tel:07780933102

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1966 TRIUMPH 5TA. Please see photos full nut and bolt restoration Tiger 5TA. Stunning please see photos. All correct matching numbers bike 5TAH46341 same engine. 1966 and what a great year that was (world cup). **£7,950**

1975 HONDA CB400. This bike is not a USA import. All correct UK bike. And one of the first 1975. Nice and original with no aftermarket parts. Please see lots of close up photos. **£6,950**

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1977 HONDA CB400. Stunning UK bike not an import she is a 1977 bike and all correct. Very original with no aftermarket parts. Please see lots of close up photos. One of the very best. **£6,750**

1974 HONDA CD200. Stunning very low miles and all original condition please see photos. Must be seen in our show room. She looks like near new but this bike has not been restored. **£3,950**

1959 NORTON JUBILEE 250. Stunning full nut and bolt restoration. All re painted to high standard . Engine rebuild and only 800 miles. 1959 and all matching numbers. ALL METAL BODY. looks great. **£3,400**

1973 HONDA CB125F. Full nut and bolt restoration please see lots of photos. Very rare historic bike. Nice and light and great fun to ride. Only 3 owners stunning no need to tax or mot and 100 miles to the gallon. **£3,250**

1960 AJS MODEL 14. Lots spent to make this little 250 ride well. Electronic ign. New battery. All correct numbers and easy kick start. Recent new paint please see photos. **£3,250**

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Ducati 900SS 1977, V lovely	**£34,950**
Ducati 900SS 1997, low miles, fantastic	**£6,500**
Ducati 900GTS 1978, restored, lovely	**£14,750**
Ducati Moto GP 3, Ex Troy Bayliss	**POA**
Ducati 350 SCR, restored	**£8,500**
Ducati NCR 1980 Race bike	**POA**
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TRIUMPH T100
1960, 0 miles, Non matching numbers, several upgrades, built for riding, good condition, ONO., GBP, 4250Warwickshire, tel: 07974153548

TRIUMPH T140V BONNEVILLE
1973, 0 miles, Matching numbers, good overall condition and good runner, more details and photos at www.anthonygodin.co.uk, GBP £7250Kent: Tel: 01622 814140

TRIUMPH TIGER CUB
1979, 0 miles, US import/export, re-Reg with T plate in 2020. Good original unspoilt condition, nice patina. Only 5280 miles. Matching numbers, starts and runs well. , GBP, 5950Devon, tel:07597297727

VELOCETTE VENOM
1959, 0 miles, 12v, EL ignition, lots of work in recent years., GBP, 8650Surrey, tel: 01737842296

YAMAHA XT
1992, 15000 miles, 15000 miles, needs some work, please call., GBP, 900Ashcott, tel: 07484103498

TRIUMPH T100
1959, 0 miles, Pre-unit, all original, matching frame and engine numbers, restored condition, easy starter, super condition., GBP, 8650Bath, tel: 07929874846

TRIUMPH T150
1974, 20000 miles, Original except Hyde exhaust and paint job, 20,000 miles, owned 31 years, new rings, valves, carbs in last 5000 miles., GBP, 7800Shropshire, tel: 01691778761

TRIUMPH TR6
1962, 29153 miles, Amazing TR6, totally original, not restored, matching numbers frame and engine., GBP, 15900France, tel: 033633308012

VESPA 150
1965, 25 miles, 1965 Vespa Scooter 150cc, lovely pastel green, excellent condition and runner, very little mileage use, MOT till August 23, even though it's tax/mot exempt, call for further information. , GBP, 2750Cleveland, tel: 01429422235

TRIUMPH T110
1954, 0 miles, Low mileage since built, riders bike, sensible upgrades, excellent condition, garage kept., GBP, 6500Warwickshire, tel: 07974153548

TRIUMPH TIGER
1973, 5898 miles, Tiger 750 with Bonneville twin carb head fitted, bike runs well and is in very good condition, it has matching numbers. American import with all papers present, very few miles since engine rebuild., GBP, 4750East Lothian, tel:07710762407

TRIUMPH T46C TROPHY
1970, 0 miles, Recent restoration, matching numbers, immaculate condition, more details and photos at www.anthonygodin.co.uk, GBP 10495Kent: Tel: 01622 814140

VINCENT COMET
1952, 0 miles, Good Runner, older high quality restoration, lots of stainless, alloy rims, amal concentric, owned 20 years., GBP, 18750Uk, tel:07512131415

TRIUMPH T120 BONNEVILLE
1967, 0 miles, Lots of recent work, great condition, matching numbers, more details and photos at www.anthonygodin.co.uk, GBP 9495Kent: Tel: 01622 814140

TRIUMPH TIGER
1967, 0 miles, Triumph Tiger 100S, owned since 2007, engine rebuild in 2016, done 1600 miles since, matching frame/engine numbers, running in good condition, please call., GBP, 4999Kent, tel:07840755356

TRIUMPH TRIDENT
1975, 0 miles, Hyde 975cc conversion, professionally built engine, cafe racer styling, alloy tank and rims, Boyer ignition, twin front discs, starts runs and rides well., GBP, 5500Suffolk, tel:07792295017

VINCENT COMET
1950, 0 miles, Project consists of a Norton Wideline rolling chassis with an incomplete Vincent Comet engine with Norton gearbox, clutch and various other parts, no documents., GBP, 3900East Sussex, tel:01435812618

TRIUMPH T140 BONNEVILLE
1961, 0 miles, Matching numbers, owned and ridden by me for the last 30 years, very good condition, please call., GBP, 13200Kent, tel:01322663471

TRIUMPH TIGER
1966, 0 miles, Excellent runner, please call., GBP, 5250Uk, tel: 01328823686

TRIUMPH TRITON
1961, 0 miles, Built from scratch by Dave Degans with letter of authenticity, call for full details., GBP, 14500Norfolk, tel: 07799957700

YAMAHA 250
1969, 0 miles, Lot of new parts, too many to list, still needs running in and has a MoT, please call. , GBP, 7000Cambridgeshire, tel:07724117812

TRIUMPH T140E
1979, 25600 miles, Matching numbers, 1979, 25600 miles, powder coating, alloy wheels, Mikuni carbs, extensive rebuild 2014, hardly used since so time to sell., GBP, 4750Coventry, tel:07990585113

TRIUMPH TIGER 110
1955, 0 miles, Matching numbers, beautifully restored, over £3500 spend, receipts to prove., GBP, 7500Lancashire, tel: 01613555514

TRIUMPH TROPHY
1973, 0 miles, 7k miles, matching numbers, owned for 27 years but now unused. Great original condition with the correct parts., GBP, 8750Reading, tel: 07528185280

YAMAHA DT250
1972, 0 miles, In excellent condition, 7500 miles, new tyres, new seals in oil pump, paintwork good, chrome good, V5 in my name, please call., GBP, 3800Devon, tel:07763772999

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CLASSIC BIKE
Wanted by enthusiast in any condition.
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VARIOUS
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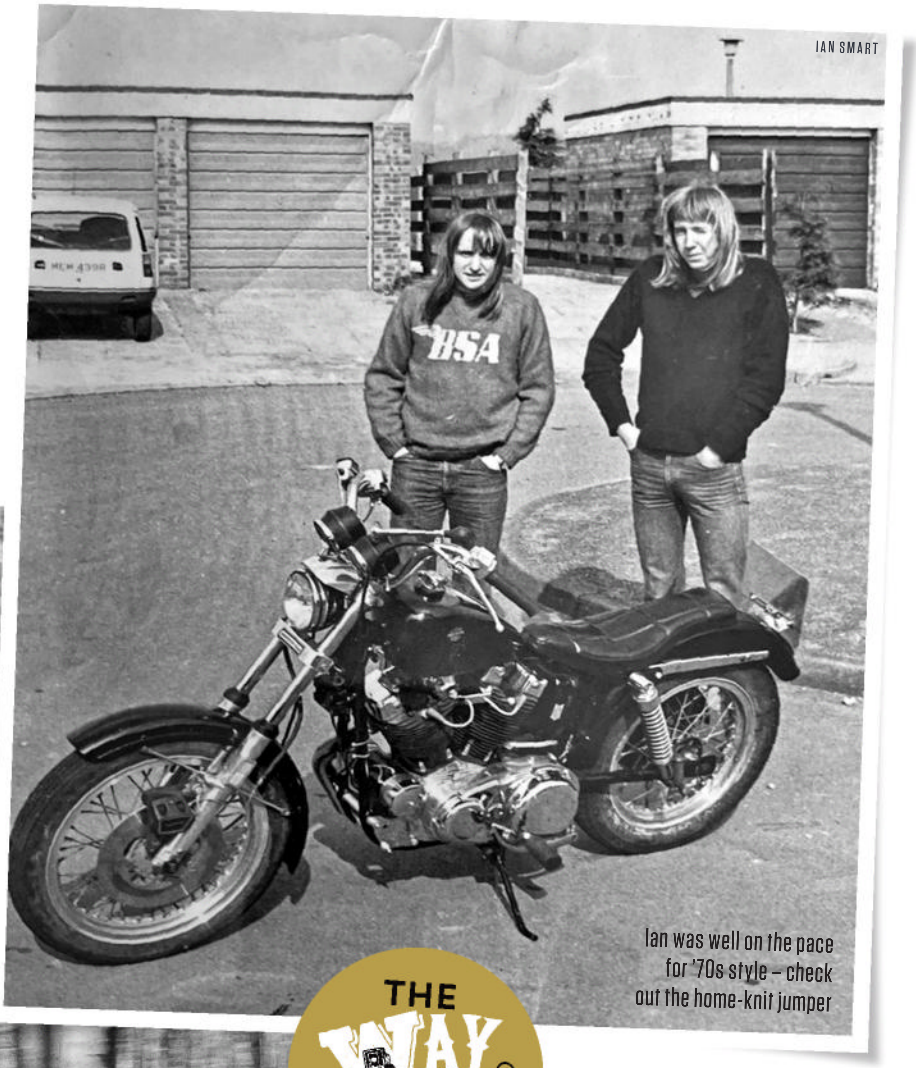
RON HASLAM REPLICAS
Collectors items, from john Walker Superbikes, inner foam lining worn, best serious offer secures.
Tel: 01159 192323 Nottingham

ONE PIECE AT A TIME

This photo was taken outside my pal's house in Cardiff in 1979. We are both 18 and I've just ridden over on my recently acquired Harley Sportster. The bike had a '62 Iron Head motor and bits of chassis from most of the subsequent years. I called it my Johnny Cash bike. I'm wearing the BSA jumper – yes, my mum did knit it; yes, I still have it; and yes, I still wear it. Keep up the good work, retro-free!
Ian Smart


IAN SMART

Ian was well on the pace for '70s style – check out the home-knit jumper

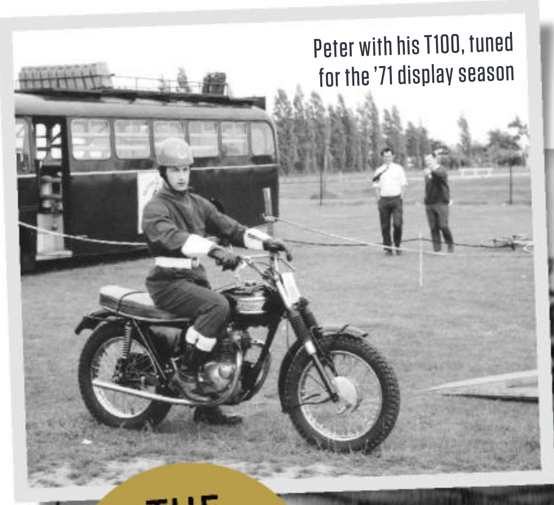
THE WAY WE WERE

PHILIPPE CONTANT

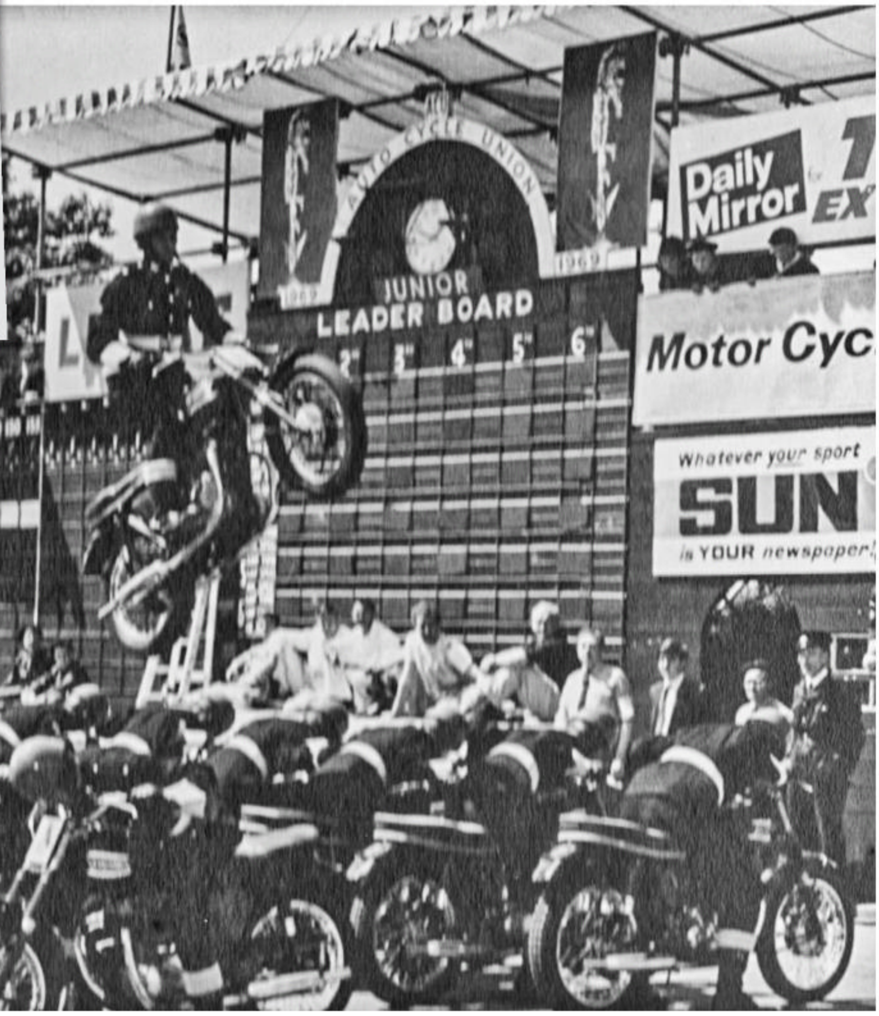
Phillippe getting his Yam AT1 airborne, with a suitably period disregard for head protection

I TAKE MINE SCRAMBLED

After reading Gez Kane's ride on a CT3 175 in the January issue, I have sent a picture of me on my 1971 AT1 125. I bought the bike in 1973, when I was 23 – it was my first scrambler, my regular road bike at this time being a Suzuki T350. My AT1 did not have the reed-valve induction, but a second spark-plug hole which, like everyone else, I used to plug in a decompression valve – very useful to give some engine braking!
I enjoyed it very much, and it inspired me to get further into scrambling. The Yamaha is still going – much to the delight of my grandson Benjamin, who also uses it.
Philippe Contant, Dolomieu France



Peter with his T100, tuned for the '71 display season



PETER SNOWDEN

I gave Giacomo a go

FROM 1968 UNTIL 1971, I was a member of the Royal Marines Motorcycle Display Team. There were three armed forces MCDT's in the '60s-'70s: The Royal Signals (The White Helmets), the Royal Artillery (representing the Army) and us – we were known as the 'Fire Riders', after a film we made in 1968 of that name, and our helmets were red.

We rode Triumph T100s. I was lucky enough to attend a course at the Meriden factory in 1969; I was assembling my own Bonneville from parts at the time, and I (ahem) got a few updated parts for my bike. For the 1971 season, my jump bike was treated to 10.5:1 pistons, high-lift camshaft, close-ratio 'box and straight through tuned exhaust at the factory (see inset picture above). It went rather well!

I used to open the show by jumping through a paper hoop with 'Royal Marines' printed on it. I also used to close the show by jumping over the 12 guys and bikes as in the picture above. A few days after the picture was taken, we were doing a show at the Isle of Man Casino car park and I did the jump as usual – but there was not much room to stop and I was hurtling towards the perimeter wall which had three guys sitting atop. I cranked the bike over to the right and my left reinforced metal footpeg dug into the wall. Fortunately, the three guys lifted their legs out of the way and I slowed down enough to regain control of the bike.

As I parked the bike, Giacomo Agostini wandered up and said: "Me?" and pointed to the bike. He wanted to have a go. I didn't think the owners of said bike (the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines being a division thereof) would mind. So he sat on the 500cc Triumph Tiger 100, fired it up and put it into gear. It made the typical Triumph crunch. He laughed and said: "Same… same MV". So presumably MVs also made a crunch when being put into gear.

He then took off and jumped up on the seat as he had seen us doing in one of the crossovers, stuck one leg out the back and did a couple of laps of the car park before handing the bike back to me. He said "Grazie" and wandered back to the Casino. I wish I had a picture of him doing that…

Peter Snowden, Canada

- SHOW US YOUR PHOTOS -

Got a photo from back in the day of you showing off your bike? Tell us the story behind it… who you are with, when and where it was taken, and – most importantly – what are your memories of the bike(s) pictured? Share it with *CB* readers by sending a decent-quality scanned image by email to the address: **classic.bike@bauermedia.co.uk**

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TriBSA 650 1955 .... £7,500

Triumph Tiger Cub 1956............. £2,950

Honda CB750 Sandcast 1969 ..... £23,950

Triumph T100 (new engine) 1957.......£5,950

Triumph Speed Twin 1958........... £8,950

Triumph Speed Twin 1960........... £4,950

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BSA RGS rep 1955	£8,950	Kawasaki GPZ900 Turbo	£9,950
Honda CB72 1964	£4,950	Yamaha RD400 1977	£5,950
Yamaha RD250F 1979	£5,950	Triumph T150 (US) 1972	£7,950
Triumph Tiger Cub 1960	£4,500	Honda CB900 Custom 1982	£3,500
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RE Crusader Sports 1968	£3,250	Yamaha XT500 (1E6) 1976	£4,950
Ariel Arrow S/Sports 1964	£3,750	Suzuki GS1100G 1983	£2,950
AJS Model 31 1959	£3,950	Yamaha DT400 1977 (1A1)	£3,950
Yamaha XS250 1979	£1,750	Laverda 1000 triple 1975	£9,950

Norton 650SS 1962 .... £9,950

Triumph T120 (new engine) 1963 .... £10,750

Triumph Mountain Cub (new engine) 1964 .... £5,950

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BMW R100 RS 1976 .... £6,950

Moto Guzzi T3 California 1977..... £5,950

Triumph T140V (Harris) 1986 ...... £6,950

Triumph Trident 900 1993........... £3,950

Triumph Daytona Super III 1997 .. £4,950

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